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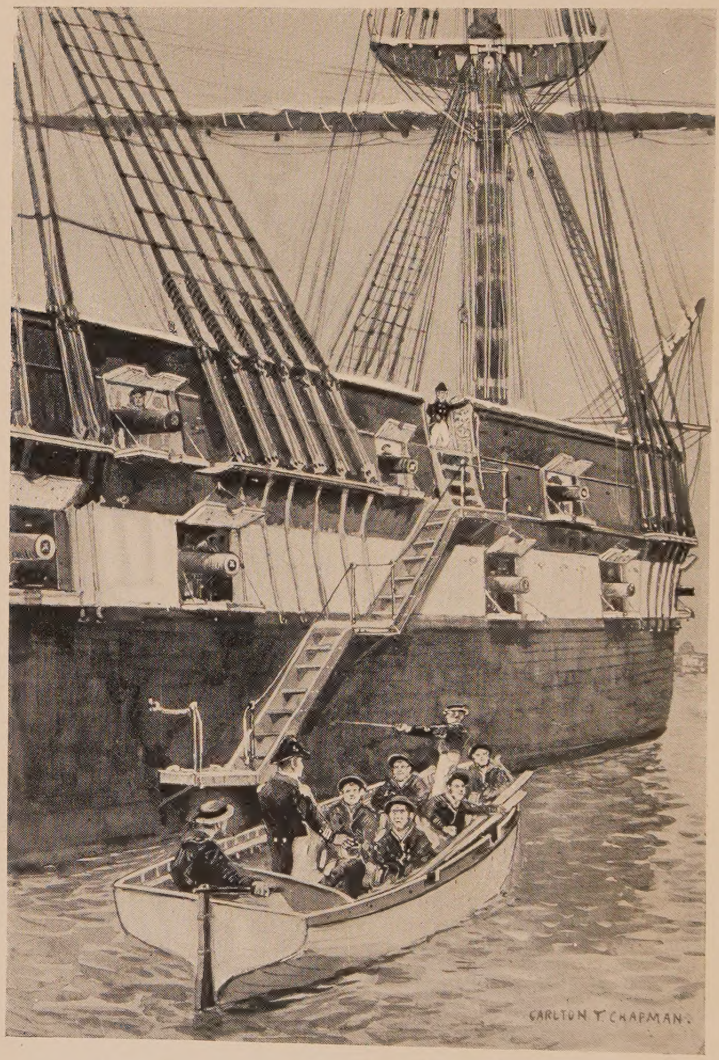


Captain Porter and young Farragut arrive at the Essex.

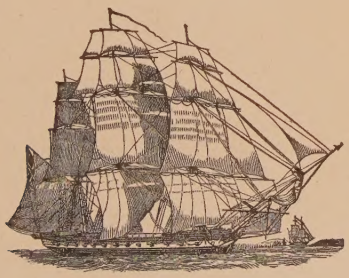
(See page 10.)

MIDSHIPMAN FARRAGUT

BY

JAMES BARNES
AUTHOR OF FOR KING OR COUNTRY, ETC.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY CARLTON T. CHAPMAN AND OTHERS



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DEDICATION.

To my friend Loyall Farragut, *whose work, The Life of David Glasgow Farragut, I have drawn upon so frequently, this little book is dedicated. The interest he has shown in my attempt to tell a story of the boyhood of his father to the boys of to-day is hereby acknowledged with deep gratitude.*

16 Mar. 1900

PREFACE.

In writing this little book the author has adhered closely to facts in the boyhood life of Admiral Farragut, and if possibilities in the way of conversations and incidents have been introduced, they can hardly be said to be pure inventions. In the Memoirs of Commodore David Porter, written by his son, the late Admiral David D. Porter, are recorded many historical speeches, some of which the author of this chronicle has taken the liberty of reproducing, setting them down *verbatim*. Porter's Narrative, a journal kept by the commander of the Essex, has been of great assistance to the author also in this writing, and from the Life and Letters of Admiral Farragut much more has been gleaned, and not a little taken from unpublished correspondence.

The characters, with one exception, are historical, and but one or two small incidents, that might well have happened, have been taken from the imagination.

That so young a boy should have displayed such fortitude and knowledge as are recorded of Midshipman Farragut may strike us as being almost too wonderful, but in the matter of dates and facts, as I have said, this is the early record of a life whose great promise was fulfilled.

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MIDSHIPMAN FARRAGUT.

CHAPTER I.

LOUISIANA.

A LITTLE, narrow canoe made from a hollowed log was dancing up and down at the end of a small wharf that extended into the shallow waters of Lake Pontchartrain.

The palmetto trees and the moss-laden oaks grew to the water's edge, where on a narrow stretch of beach some little negro boys were playing noisily in the sun.

All at once one of them set up a shout.

"Hyah comes Massa David," he said, pointing up a path that led down to the pier.

A figure no bigger than any of the little negroes, dressed in a light, cool suit of white cotton, stepped down the bank—a clear-eyed youngster with a high forehead and waving brown hair.

"What are you doing, Eugene?" he called to the largest black boy.

"Playin' huntin' 'gator, sah," responded the small negro, with a touch of that strange accent, half Afri-

can, half French, that marks the speech of the Louisiana blacks.

In those days it was easy to play at hunting real alligators, for that matter; their great forms were plentiful along the bayous and inlets of the lake, and the runways, where they crawled in and out to sun themselves on warm days, were evident without much searching.

The little white boy joined in with the others in their play. He had always wrestled and run races with them, but, although they were his companions, there was a marked difference in their mutual treatment—indeed, the little boy addressed as "Eugene" belonged heart and body to the youngster in the white cotton suit.

While the game was at its noisiest a tall, slight man appeared on the path.

"David," called a musical and commanding voice, "come out for a sail with me, my son."

It was not exactly put in the form of a request; it was more like a command. The little negroes had stopped their noise at once, and without a word their young master joined the tall man who had now made his way out on the pier and was untying the fastenings of the pirogue, the name given to the wooden canoes of the gulf.

The boy did not speak, but settled himself in the stern sheets, making room for his father to sit beside him.

Only skillful handling could carry such a long, narrow, and apparently dangerous craft through the choppy

seas. The wind was blowing stiffly, and the sail of the pirogue was large and held the breeze in a manner that caused the little craft to list now and then dangerously to leeward.

The boy held tight to the seat, the spray dashing into his face. Not once did a look of fear, however, show for an instant.

The skipper seemed to enjoy the sensation. He would shove the little vessel's nose up into the wind at exactly the right moment. Often he would lean far out over the side to help keep the proper balance.

No mistake, Sailing-Master George Farragut could handle a pirogue in a way that was equaled by none of the half-breed or the Creole fishermen who made their living along the bayous and the lake. In fact, he was the only one who had ever made a voyage in one of these crank vessels from New Orleans to Havana and returned in safety.

At last, after sailing on in silence for a few minutes, Mr. Farragut turned.

"David," he said, "we are going to have a visitor tonight. You may remember a naval officer who was ill at our house some time ago and who died there. It is his son, Commander David Porter, who is coming to visit us. We must try to make it comfortable for him."

"Yes, sir," the little boy said gravely. He remembered well the visit of Commodore Porter and the time that his elder brother William had entered the

navy. Secretly in his heart he had cherished the hope that some day he might wear the same uniform, that he might sail abroad and see the strange countries of which he had often and often heard his father speak.

When they had returned to the landing, the boy helped to tie the pirogue in its accustomed place and, taking his father's hand, walked silently beside him up to the low rambling house, half concealed in its covering of vines whose leaves tapped against the small window frames. A little girl and a tiny youngster of four greeted their father and brother at the doorway, and were sent away to get dressed in their best clothes.

That evening a tall, handsome man in a fine uniform, with a high, stiff stock and gold-laced epaulets sat at Mr. Farragut's table. Little David could hardly keep his admiring eyes from Commander Porter's splendid figure. He had scarcely spoken throughout the meal, for the maxim had been very firmly impressed upon his mind that "small boys should be seen and not heard."

The gentlemen had been talking together in low voices when suddenly Mr. Farragut raised his eyes and looked affectionately across the table at his son. The question he asked set David's heart beating as it hardly ever beat before.

"Commander Porter wishes to know if you like the navy, my boy?" he inquired.

But before David could reply the naval officer had supplemented the question with another.

"Would you come with me and be a midshipman some day?" he asked.

There was no shyness or no hesitation in the answer the small boy gave. His hands were tightly gripped together in his lap and his eyes shone.

"Yes, sir," he said, "if father will let me."

"Spoken like a little man," returned Commander Porter. "Mr. Farragut, let him go with me. I shall treat him as though he were my son."

"We shall see," rejoined the father thoughtfully.—"Come now, run away."

This last was addressed to David and his little sister. The children bowed as they went out the door, and left the gentlemen to their cigars. The boy did not know, however, the substance of the talk which followed, nor had he any idea that it was a long farewell he was soon to take of his Louisiana home.

David had picked up little or no learning from books, except his letters, but his active mind recorded everything he saw. He knew the note of every bird in the canebrake. He could tell the different kinds of waterfowl that paddled about in the rushes offshore. Often at midnight he had lain awake listening to the boom of the alligators or the hoarse cry of the bittern in the swamps. But his mind had been always filled with a desire to see the stranger countries and stranger creatures of the lands from whence had

come the curious shells and the many relics that his father had collected in his voyages.

Commander Porter had been attracted by David from the first, and it was a strange and sudden proposition that he made to Mr. Farragut. It was that he should adopt David and take care of his future and his bringing up. The children were half orphans, for their mother had died only a few years before.

George Farragut hesitated some time. He was not a wealthy man, and his life had been a constant changing of one thing for another. He had been a merchant, a major in the army, a settler and trader with the Indians in Tennessee, a sailing master in the merchant service, and had commanded a schooner as an officer of the regular navy before he had purchased the small farm on the Pascagoula River. But it was a chance for his son that might never come again. So, after some deliberation, he accepted the proposition.

Commander Porter had then charge of the naval station at New Orleans. Through his influence it would be easy for him to obtain a midshipman's warrant for the little lad who had won his heart; but David was too young yet to go immediately into the service. So, when a few weeks later Commander Porter was relieved and transferred to Washington, the boy set out with him to attend school in the North.

So thus came the day when he was to bid a final farewell to the scenes that had come to mean home to him, and to set sail on the open sea.

He did not weep, although he had hard work to choke back the tears as his father kissed him the last time. Mrs. Porter had opened her kind, motherly heart to the strange, dignified little lad, and as she stood beside him on the deck of her husband's vessel, watching Mr. Farragut row back to the shore, she held David's hand closely in her own.

The Vesuvius, Commander Porter's vessel, was a small bomb ketch and the quarters were very cramped. It took some days' sailing before they were fairly out of the gulf; then they rounded the Florida capes, shaping their course for the North Atlantic.

Already had love and admiration for his adopted father begun to fill the boy's heart. He admired the way in which he walked the small quarter-deck; the manner in which the men jumped at his word; and once, when there was a blow, and the Vesuvius was dipping deep into the great waves, he felt quite safe, as he had often felt in the pirogue with his real father, because he trusted the hand that was at the helm. He felt that with Commander Porter in charge, affairs could not go wrong.

But soon they were to part; for immediately after the arrival of the Vesuvius in Philadelphia David was bundled off to a boarding school in a Pennsylvania town, and, as his life here was devoid of anything unusual, we skip over it in this story and make haste to begin a more eventful chapter.

CHAPTER II.

A MIDSHIPMAN OF THE ESSEX.

It was the early part of August in the year 1811. The weather was very warm. The dust covered the grass and the leaves of the trees until the lower branches had turned a silvery gray.

Four sweltering horses were tugging a lumbering coach along a rough Virginia road. The wheels jolted and rattled noisily, and the people inside appeared too hot and uncomfortable for indulging in conversation.

Seated back of the driver was a tall man in the uniform of an officer of the navy. His face was red, and he had tucked his handkerchief inside of the stock that came almost up to his ears; the shirt frill that hung out of his unbuttoned coat was as wilted as if it had never known starch. A little boy was seated close beside him with his feet swinging loosely from side to side—his legs were too short to reach even to the top of the driver's seat. He had on trousers which the day before, when he had left school, had been white and new. Occasionally he would endeavor to brush the dust from his sleeves, and he was bitterly regretting that he had not saved his best uni-

form against the time he should be on shipboard. The small blue jacket with brass buttons had been the envy of all the lads at the Chester Academy.

David Glasgow Farragut was the youngest officer in the United States service, having received his appointment as midshipman when he was but nine years and five months old. Now, at the age of ten, he was on his way with his adopted father, Captain Porter, to join his ship, the Essex, lying at anchor in the harbor of Norfolk. And thus we find the two making the long trip together by coach on this hot August day, a year after the events of the preceding chapter.

As the lumbering, clumsy vehicle tottered down a steep run that led to the ford of a half-dry stream bed, one of the horses, that was slipping and holding back, with the collar almost over his eyes, missed his footing and fell. To avoid running over him, the driver hauled the leaders sharply across the road. The front wheels cramped, and, without a word of warning being given, the coach spilled every one on top into the mud and shallow water of the brook. Captain Porter was the first to get to his feet. Little David was kneeling waist deep looking about for his hat. The mud and the water had about completed the spoiling of his pride-inspiring uniform.

"No one hurt!" cried a fat merchant, brushing off his spattered cord breeches.

"Then all on board again!" laughed Captain Porter.

Soon the coach was, so to speak, on its legs and

moving along; late in the afternoon it rumbled into Norfolk. Even above the house tops and the trees, looking to seaward, the tall masts of the Essex could be seen. Captain Porter pointed the vessel out with pride.

"There is our home, my son," he said, "I hope, for the next three years."

When they reached the dock the tall officer walked out to the end of the stringpiece and waved his handkerchief. He had been seen, however, before this, and the sailors were tumbling out on the boat yards and sliding down into the gig. Soon they were pulling toward shore.

David had involuntarily reached as if to take the Captain's hand for an instant, but had checked himself. The tall figure bent over him.

"Son," he said, softly, "you are a midshipman of the Essex now and I am her commander. Don't think that I am harsh or unkind, or that I do not love you, if I speak hard and sharp to you. You must, like the others, obey orders and be a little man."

David drew himself up as he had seen one of the midshipmen on the Vesuvius do. His small fingers sought the brim of his cap.

"Aye, aye, sir!" he answered steadily; but as they rowed out to the ship he never felt so lonely in his life, and not even on the first night at the school in Chester had he felt such a sense of homesickness as he did when he crawled into his hammock in the

steerage only a short time after darkness had set in. The trip on the stage coach had been very wearisome; he was sore and tired.

David had not been surprised to find that he was the very smallest and the youngest of all the midshipmen whose hammocks swung close to his, and he felt a little strange as he lay there doubled up in the hollow of the canvas bag that was much too big for him. The sounds of feet overhead on the deck, the shrilling now and then of the pipe, and the calling away of the boats kept him awake until almost midnight. When at last he fell asleep he dreamed that he was once more sailing with his real father in the pirogue across the sunny waters of Lake Pontchartrain. He could hear the shrill laughter of the little negro boys, and imagined that he and Eugene had captured an alligator that could talk French after the manner of old Madame Dupont's green parrot.

For three or four days now David remained on shipboard. It took some time to find out which was the stern and which was the bow, and often when he came out of the steerage he became twisted and started in the wrong direction.

But to relate rather a curious thing that happened during the stay in harbor. On the police court records of Norfolk, Virginia, appears the following entry: "David Farragut, Midshipman, of the frigate Essex, bound over to keep the peace. Bonds furnished."

And hereby hangs a story. David had been sent

ashore in charge of the first cutter, and was waiting at the end of the pier for the appearance of some officers whom he was to take off to the ship. The usual crowd of loafers and rowdies had collected along the shore. David's diminutive size (he was dressed in his cocked hat and brass buttons) attracted their attention, and they began to poke fun at the "baby officer." For a long time he ignored these insults, but his crew was getting angrier every minute, and suddenly something happened that started the finest kind of a row. A low-visaged fellow had obtained possession of a watering pot, and, leaning over the pier head, he carefully watered the little midshipman, at the same time expressing the hope "that he might grow."

This was too much. A sailor named Hawley loosened one of the boat's stretchers and hurled it at the offender. It caught him on the head and laid him low. A stone was thrown in return. The Jacktars at this jumped out of the boat, and, swinging improvised weapons—oars and boat hooks—about their heads, they waded into the crowd. All the way up the main street of the town they fought, David Farragut following close in their wake, now and then, it must be told, encouraging them by shrill, half-tearful shouts.

The appearance of some constables on the scene interrupted matters, and the whole party, including the ringleaders of the rioters, were marched to the station house. But the only notice taken on board ship of

this episode was that the other midshipmen ceased teasing "the youngster," and Captain Porter remarked to Lieutenant Downes at breakfast that young Farragut was "three pounds of uniform and *seventy pounds of fight*."

CHAPTER III.

PRACTICAL INSTRUCTION.

It was Christmas eve, four months after our little reefer had joined his ship. There was no vessel that was smarter or better manned in the navy at that time. During those four months Captain Porter had accomplished wonders, and David Farragut, Midshipman, had fallen easily into the duties that were expected of him.

The Essex was particularly happy in having a mutual feeling of confidence and respect among the officers. The midshipmen liked them, the sailors liked them, and that meant happy days. From Lieutenant Downes, the first officer, to Purser Shaw, they were men kind and considerate of others, and anxious to attract and hold the admiration of those under their orders.

So efficient had the crew become that they had been divided into three watches instead of four. Few complaints were heard in the forecastle. Everything was reduced to such a system, and the work so evenly divided, that, wonderful to relate, grumblers were scarce. There was plenty to do and time to do it

in. It was a maxim of the commander that "steady work means steady comfort."

But to return to the Christmas eve. It was very cold, and the day had been what sailors call "a weather breeder." As the Essex was trying to make Newport harbor early in the evening, the slight wind suddenly died away, and she was forced to come to anchor off the bluffs.

The thermometer kept falling lower and lower, and, unfortunately, the barometer also. But the midshipmen were endeavoring to have a little jollification in the steerage, and it was so cold that they had obtained permission to have some "hot shot" brought in. This was not a nickname for anything good to eat, as might have been supposed. It was a species of portable stove, being nothing more or less than two or three solid cannon balls heated red hot in the galley fire and carried about in buckets filled with sand. But even this failed to make the steerage warm, and the game of blindman's buff was given up at last for double blankets in the hammocks.

At about four o'clock in the morning David and all the watch below were awakened by feeling that the Essex had begun to jump and toss spasmodically; then the boatswain's pipe shrilled down the hatchway, and the hoarse bawl of his mates rang through the "'tween-decks."

"All hands on deck! Tumble up lively, there!" was the call that stirred the midshipmen out of their warm

nests. Few had undressed at all, and it only remained for them to jump into their boots and draw on their great coats and they were ready.

When they made their way to the spar deck they found themselves in the midst of an exciting scene. The great yards were straining and swaying, and straight across the deck and through the rigging howled the sleet and snow. It banked up against the guns; it weighted every rope and stay, and forward on the top-gallant forecastle a small army of men were bending on a new hawser to a great black anchor ready to let it go at the command. An officer with a trumpet shouted some orders from the quarter-deck. The wind blew the words away, and a boatswain's mate, standing near, came up with his hand making a hollow back of his ear. He caught the order, and, sliding and scrambling, carried it to the officers on the forecastle. There was a sudden blow of an axe, and a plash as the great anchor dropped into the sea. Then the men sought shelter behind the bulwarks, and some, dripping and half frozen, plunged down the hatchway.

Looking out across the stern, the midshipmen saw a wonderful sight. They could just make out the dark shape of the bluffs and the spray playing up in the air like a row of fountains. Suddenly a voice exclaimed close to them:

"You are right, Mr. Wilmer; we are drifting, sir." It was Captain Porter speaking. "Call all hands

again, sir! Let go the other anchor and be quick about it," he added.

Now all was excitement once more, and there was no rest that night. The Essex still dragged nearer to the shore where the waves broke and leaped high against the points of the great sharp rocks. At three o'clock a fourth anchor was let go, but she dragged the whole of them. Nearer and nearer she drifted toward the line of heavy surf. Suddenly there came a shock that sent a tremor through her stout timbers and through the heart of every man on the slippery, sleet-covered deck. The ship had grounded! David, who had crept under the break of the poop deck, gave a gasp; he knew something had happened that meant great danger.

There were two men standing by the wheel. One of them was an old boatswain's mate, William Kingsbury, a type of what was best in a seaman. The midshipmen looked upon him as knowing everything that could be known by any one who followed ships. Marvelous tales could he spin and marvelous knots could he tie. When he shook his head they shook their heads also, for they knew that was the proper thing to do. He was a story book and a barometer, a prophet and a hero.

David had been joined in his place of shelter by Midshipman Jack Cowan, who swung next to him. It only needed a glance at old Kingsbury's face for the boys to determine that things were serious.

"Mark me, messmate," said old Kingsbury, bellowing in his companion's ear, "our to'gallant masts will go, if this keeps on, I tell you; mark my word!"

No sooner had he spoken than a sharp snapping report rang out above the roaring of the wind in the rigging. Down came the main top-gallant mast, swinging dangerously close to the deck. Then a sudden gust, harder than the rest, caught it, and it swung clear of the side and tangled happily in the starboard shrouds. Another snap and the mizzen top-gallant mast went over the side.

It was blowing so hard by this time that it was impossible to keep the deck. The men crawled along under the lee of the bulwarks, and from their position of security the two boys saw there was only one living figure now in sight—an officer holding fast to the hammock nettings on the quarter-deck. It was Captain Porter.

It had been impossible to house the masts, as everything was frozen stiff. There was only one thing more left to do, and soon preparations were made to carry the last hope out. Standing in the galley were a score of men with axes, ready at a word to rush out on the deck and hack away the stays and let the great masts go overboard.

But just at this critical moment the wind changed a few points, and old Kingsbury's face relaxed.

"We're safe," he said. "It's blown its worst and hardest."

Now almost as quickly as it had arisen the storm died down, and the exhausted crew sought sleep and rest. But it was broad daylight, and so cold had it been that it was found that one of the powder monkeys—a black boy—had frozen in his hammock.

By good handling the Essex was worked off the bank, and on the afternoon of Christmas day she anchored in the inner harbor.

Again was David sent to school—this time to a Mr. Adams in Newport, but he had for his companions all the midshipmen of the Essex and of two other vessels which were then in port. There was little time for skylarking; it was mostly work, work and study, study from morning until nightfall. For five long months the boys saw no more of shipboard life. Then it came to be rumored that they would soon be ordered to sea again, and the prospect of a change was hailed with joy by all.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CLOUD OF WAR.

LATE in the month of June a small squadron of American vessels of war lay at anchor in the harbor of New York—the President, a forty-four-gun frigate; the Essex, thirty-two guns; and the Hornet of eighteen.

Midshipman Farragut had once more joined his ship, and on this fine June day he was looking out through the gangway at the busy shipping and watching the shore boats shuttling back and forth. The air was filled with the creaking of block and tackle.

David had made great friends with Kingsbury, the boatswain's mate. He was off duty, and he noticed that the old sailor was also taking things easy, so he made his way up on the forecastle.

There is no reason why a boatswain's mate may not be allowed to tell stories to midshipmen, and many a long tale had David and his friends, Midshipmen Dashiell and Cowan, listened to in the night watches.

As soon as the boy was within earshot the old sailor began to talk. It was only a week or so since the news had reached New York of the declaration of

war against England. It was the uppermost thing in everybody's mind, and of course was the only subject of discussion on shipboard.

"This 'ere war," began old Bill as a matter of course, "is a war of shootin' and sailin'. There ain't a-goin' to be no big fleets tyin' up to one another, and boardin' and grapplin'. It's going to be cut and run, and fire fast, I tell you, Mr. Farragut. Ain't they beauties, them two vessels!"

He swept his hand out toward the President off the port bow and then to the little Hornet, swinging a quarter of a mile or so astern.

David turned around and looked back on the deck of his own ship. Although it was in somewhat of confusion owing to the great hurry and bustle incident to getting in commission for a long cruise, any one with half an eye could see that the Essex was commanded by a sailor, that her crew were sailors, and that her officers were able. There was little of bawling or shouting of orders; every man seemed to do his duty and to know his place. All the loose running gear was flemished down and lay in neat flat coils on the deck as if ready for Sunday inspection.

"It's my idee that we can teach them Johnny Bulls something about ships, Mr. Farragut," said old Kingsbury, with an accent of pride. "And I tell you what, sir, there ain't a man on board but what would jump into the chain-hold head first for Captain Porter."

On the 21st of June the other vessels sailed out to sea, but the Essex remained a few days in port overhauling her rigging and restowing her hold. These were busy and tiresome times, and everybody on board longed for the hour when she would have put the headlands behind and have the blue sea beneath and behind her.

For three successive days the declaration of war with Great Britain was read by Captain Porter to the crew assembled in the waist, and each time after the reading he inquired if there was any one on board who objected to fighting on the plea of being a British subject.

On the last day there came a sensation. A man stepped forward and declared he was an Englishman. A murmur ran through the crew, and the midshipmen will never forget the dramatic scene that followed. No sooner had the man made his declaration than another sailor stepped to the mast beside him.

"This man lies!" he said. "I know him well. We were brought up together, man and boy, at Barnstable."

The murmur grew louder.

"Step back among the crew," said Captain Porter to both men.

The man who had claimed to be an Englishman paled. He hesitated about obeying the order, for three or four of the foremast hands stepped forward to meet him. It was with difficulty that they could be restrained.

The boatswain's mate discourses upon the war.

However, Captain Porter allowed them to wreak a little vengeance, for just before the vessel sailed the man was put ashore, as he had requested to be. He was, however, dressed in a unique costume for that season of the year: it was composed of tar and feathers!

But at last the Essex was out on the open sea, and the success which was to attend her during the next three years began almost at once. Several rich merchantmen were taken and sent in under prize crews. The crew drilled at the guns, and when the weather was fine a target would be towed out from the ship; even firing by divisions was practiced. This was not very exciting, and, so far, none of the midshipmen had seen a shot fired in real earnest.

David's station on shipboard in case of action was close to Captain Porter. The admiration that a boy feels for a fine, courageous man, animated him so that he felt sure that, no matter what happened, he could be brave so long as he was near his adopted father.

One very foggy day about nine o'clock in the morning Midshipman Richard Dashiell, Midshipman Henry W. Ogden, and young Farragut were standing together on the quarter-deck. There was quite a breeze blowing for such thick weather, and the Essex was plowing along through the slow rolling sea when suddenly David Farragut raised his hand.

"Hush!" he said. "Don't you hear a noise?"

"I don't hear anything but the noise up aloft," returned Dashiell, listening.

"No, it's out there," said David, pointing with his finger out across the water to windward.

All the midshipmen strained their ears to listen. Yes, sure enough, they heard it now! And they knew well what it was: the creaking of the yards of some other vessel sailing in the fog close to them. In an instant David stepped across to Lieutenant McKnight, who was officer of the deck.

"There's a ship off there, I think, sir," he said, saluting.

Lieutenant McKnight stopped his measured pacing and listened attentively.

"Go forward, Mr. Farragut, and get down on the bobstay, close to the water, sir," he said, "and see what you can see. The fog may hang high."

Any order that was given in a loud voice would certainly be heard by the vessel off to windward, and it was only the mere fact of her being in that position that had, so far, prevented the noise of the sailing of the Essex being heard by her.

David scrambled over the bowsprit and nettings and slid down the "dolphin striker" almost to the water. The fog was a few feet higher than the surface, and, bending down, he could dimly make out some distance off a great black shape; but he did not hurry back until he made a more careful survey. The white wall of mist lifted an instant and then he

saw it plainly. He could see a great line of ports, and catch a gleam of the copper as the hollow of a wave swept by her side. It was a great ship of war carrying a double tier of guns. He counted them carefully.

Crawling up once more on deck, he made his way aft and reported what it was he had seen. Lieutenant McKnight looked at the boy with admiration. It was not usual for a youngster to stop to made such careful observations.

"Go below, sir, and tell Captain Porter," he said, calling at the same time to one or two other officers who, although off duty, were on deck.

"I judge it is the Antelope—fifty guns," said Captain Porter. "She is on this station, I hear, off the Newfoundland banks, and probably looking for us."

Without an order being shouted, the Essex was thrown up into the wind, her main topsail backed against the mast, and she was hove to silently.

The Antelope (for it was afterward proved Captain Porter was right) swept on through the fog.

Only four or five persons on board the Essex knew how close they had been to the enemy. The reason that Captain Porter had not taken advantage of the surprise was the difficulty of assuring himself of the character of the other ship, and the knowledge that English vessels generally sailed in companies of two or three. It was seldom the case that a single ship made an independent cruise.

CHAPTER V.

A CAPTURE.

THREE days after the foggy morning another adventure took place that was somewhat more exciting.

It was just past midnight. The moon was up full and round and the horizon line could be seen almost as plainly as if it were daylight. The Essex was carrying a good strong breeze abeam, making five or six knots an hour. The harsh outlines of the shrouds and the backstays looked like great spiders' webs, and it would strike the imagination that this huge vessel would blow away at a stronger puff of the wind.

David had turned in but was yet awake. One of the midshipmen who had just come off watch was sleepily stowing something in his sea chest when a quartermaster entered the steerage.

"Call to quarters, young gentlemen," he said.

The rousing out of two hundred men makes considerable confusion. The pattering of bare feet and the mumbling of conversation was coming from the berth deck. What could it mean? Only a drill, most probably.

When David had gone below he had been thinking that it hardly seemed possible that such a peaceful-looking spectral thing as the Essex appeared to be could ever be turned into a flaming, death-dealing war ship. But as he hurried up and took his station on the quarter-deck, it was a strange sight he saw.

So plain did the moon's rays make everything that lights were not needed, and only below were the battle lanterns, shaded by tarpaulin covers, ready for use. The men could be seen standing at the guns. Now and then one would bend down and peer out of the open port. Up aloft the topmen were shaking out the royals.

There was not a sound except the booming of the wind in the lower courses. It might have been a crew of ghosts on a ghost ship.

Often at night had the men been called to general quarters before this. It was the commander's intention to make every man perfect in his line of duty, and the sailor or marine who did not know his position in any given emergency was made to suffer, for it was not for lack of practice.

But somehow these preparations on this moonlight night did not appear to be like the usual drill. David and the other midshipmen, who would grumble somewhat at being turned out of their warm hammocks, had at first suspected that it was one of Captain Porter's surprise parties, but seeing one of the officers looking through his night glass over the rail,

David clutched the hammock nettings and managed to lift himself until he could obtain a view over the side.

Clear in the moonlight to leeward, sailing straight through the shining silvery path that the moon traced across the water, was a fleet of vessels. All sail was set, and they rose and fell at intervals in a long line. Now and then a light flashed.

The Essex, under the impetus of the new canvas that stretched up high against the little fleecy clouds, was coming down upon the strangers. The water was roaring under her forefoot and feathering off into two great lines of white.

It was all so weird and so beautiful that David could scarcely imagine that it was not a dream. No one had spoken to him. Every one had seemed to be impressed with the same sense of unreality, when suddenly he heard the end of a conversation that Captain Porter had been having with his first lieutenant.

"They are English, Mr. Downes. There's no mistaking that."

"I think the leading vessel is a man-of-war, sir, from the set of her canvas and the way she steps it," returned the lieutenant.

But now it was evident that the approach of the Essex had been noticed. A light wavered and two lanterns crawled up to the yardarm of the leading vessel. There appeared to be some confusion in the fleet.

A small brig well astern broke out into a cloud of new canvas.

"She looks like a little chicken strayed from the old hen," said Midshipman Cowan to David.

But there was no mistaking what Captain Porter's intentions were. The ship's boys were bringing up from the magazine the packages of powder. The men were trotting silently to the guns with the wooden trays carrying round shot. The matches were lit and smoking and the guns were loaded and primed carefully.

The only loud order was given by a marine officer, who tramped his little company of sailor-soldiers off to the quarter-deck to take their positions along the taffrail.

A small boat gun had been mounted in the maintop. David was watching them make it secure on the gratings when Captain Porter turned and spoke to him.

"You have sharp eyes, Mr. Farragut." (How strange it seemed to David to be addressed as "Mr." Farragut!) "Climb up aloft and see if you can pick out what vessels carry guns. I think the foremost is a frigate."

David hastened up into the rigging. How huge the top seemed! It was like a great broad floor. There were twenty men there, some armed with muskets and others employed in securing the swivel. He did not pause, however, but crawled up higher

and higher until he reached the crosstrees. The mast swayed gently, and down below, the ship looked so long and narrow that it appeared to him that his weight would almost keel her over. The sails bulged out in smooth white shapes. He almost forgot what it was that he had come to look for, but now he could see the fleet more plainly.

There were nine vessels. The largest had come up into the wind and was evidently waiting for the rest to gather closer. It was the sheep dog waiting to protect the sheep; but if such was her intention she had not been taught aright. The Essex was making straight for her when she turned on her heel and crept in among the flock. This action was so unexpected that the officers on the Essex's deck were puzzled.

David had scrambled down from his lookout.

"A frigate and two armed brigs, sir," he said.

"The rest are transports, I take it," put in Lieutenant Downes. "We will pass the time of day before we leave them."

A half hour went by. So close now had the Essex come that she was almost within hail of a large bark near by on the larboard hand. Marvelous to relate, the Yankee vessel passed under the stern but to windward of the large frigate without a shot being fired or a question asked. Sailing close to the wind, she shaped her course and crossed athwart the bows of the bark.

The little brig, scudding along with her wings in

the water, had managed to creep up with the rest. There was evidently confusion on board the stranger vessel that was left behind and whose escape was now cut off.

But the Essex did not fire a gun, and she had approached to such near distance that it was hardly necessary to use the trumpet for hailing.

The order to the English captain to back his topsail was instantly obeyed, as was also the command to lower his flag and surrender.

Without a shot the Essex dropped her boats and took possession, while the fleet to leeward became spectators. The prize proved to be an English transport having on board over one hundred and fifty officers and men destined for the army in Canada.

The English gentlemen were much chagrined. They were invited into the cabin, and loudly expressed their wonder at the actions of the convoy and the guard ships. The latter were now three or four miles off and going down the wind as fast as they could leg it.

From the officers it was learned that the frigate was the Minerva, carrying the same number of guns as the Essex and with a crew and armament complete.

CHAPTER VI.

A YANKEE TRICK.

THE next morning the unusual spectacle was presented of a single vessel tagging along at the heels of the English fleet. Porter had shaken out his flag, hoping to entice the Minerva to come out and meet him.

The English officers who were his guests were loud in their denunciations of the conduct of the Minerva's commanding officer. They expressed their intentions of reporting him to the Admiralty in England, and the crew of the Essex held an impromptu meeting in the forecastle and sent two of their members aft with rather an alarming request. Old William Kingsbury was the spokesman. David could never forget how the old sailor looked as he stood twirling his cap in his hands and speaking earnestly to Captain Porter, who could scarcely restrain his merriment.

What the crew wanted, was in short, to have the Essex sail down and attack the whole convoy! In this madness, of course, Captain Porter did not agree, but nevertheless it was evident that he felt pleased at the spirit of the crew.

There were so many prisoners now on board the

Essex that the crew would soon be reduced to half rations; and so, relieving the Englishmen of their arms and placing them on parole, Captain Porter prepared to send them on their way in the captured merchant vessel.

Four or five days after the unsuccessful attempt to lure the English frigate into an engagement the Essex had her first chance to do some fighting, if such it could be called.

A sail was discovered to windward, and from her general outline she was thought to be a British sloop of war. The Essex was sailing under reefed topsails. As soon as it was placed beyond doubt in the minds of the officers that the stranger was one of the enemy, Captain Porter determined to entice her within gunshot. He dropped two long drags (made of spars and sailcloth) astern, displayed the English flag, and, sending men aloft, mastheaded the yards and apparently made every effort as if to escape.

The ruse was successful and the sloop of war bore down upon the Essex. The huge joke soon spread through the ship. The ports were not opened, and the tompions were in the mouths of the guns; yet every man was at his post waiting for the word.

"David," said Midshipman Ogden, "isn't this the funniest thing you ever saw?"

The boys had made their way up the rigging and they watched the sloop come down closer and closer, and they could see that she was prepared for ac-

tion, as her ports were dropped and her men at quarters.

It reminded David somehow of the way the hunters used to call ducks in Louisiana. She was coming to the decoy.

"Now, there will be some surprised people on board that ship," said Midshipman Ogden.

"Did you ever see such a broad grin in your life as Kingsbury has on his face?" remarked David, nudging his companion.

The boatswain's mate was passing just below them. As he went about the corner of the galley he met the colored cook, who was nicknamed "Phœbe" by the crew. He was a short, fat darky with a round bullet-head with little or no wool on the top. Kingsbury behaved just as a big boy might in an excess of good spirits. He caught the little negro in his arms and, lifting him, gave him first a squeeze and then lowered him softly to the deck. Then catching hold of one of his legs, he gave him a twirl like a top. Several of the crew had seen it and a titter broke out along the side.

It did not look like going into action. But excitement affects bodies of men often as if they were one person, and fun or merriment is as contagious as fear or courage sometimes.

"They have not taken the stoppers out of the guns," said David.

"Tompions you mean, youngster," corrected Ogden.

"I should have known better," David said to himself, "but then they are stoppers after all."

"Are the guns loaded?" asked another midshipman who met the boys as they descended to the deck.

"Captain Porter's guns are always loaded, young gentleman," said the third lieutenant, with a smile. "You'd better jump to your stations."

The sloop's lower sails could now be seen over the bulwarks of the Essex. She came down, with the water roaring and tumbling in front of her, and crossed close under the Yankee's stern, firing a gun, at which the frigate hove to.

"Now we've got you, my son," observed William Kingsbury, slapping his thigh as the sloop of war ranged up on the lee quarter.

No sooner had he spoken than the English flag at the Essex's peak came down to the deck and the Stars and Stripes went up instead.

It was evident that the English commander had been puzzled, and now he must have received a shock; but the answer to the American flag was a brave British cheer, and the smaller vessel immediately poured in a broadside of grape and canister. They struck harmlessly in the frigate's bulwarks.

Answering her helm, the Essex swung off a point and fired a single broadside in answer—tompions and all! It was like a big dog who, attacked by a smaller, gives him one shake and drops him, just for a lesson.

The sloop of war now attempted to run, but, cutting loose the drags, the Essex forereached on her, hand over fist.

A red-coated marine on the Englishman's quarter-deck fired his musket in the air and down came the cross of St. George.

Perhaps it was unkind, but it was hard to restrain the American crew from making some rough jokes upon the others as they came on board, the general opinion being that it was "mighty kind to come and pay a visit, Johnnie Bull."

The Essex was now more than ever crowded with prisoners—in fact, she had almost as many prisoners as there were people of her own on board.

The good effect of the continuous drill was shown by a little incident that occurred two days after the capture of the English sloop of war, which had proved to be the Alert of eighteen guns.

The fire drill had been practiced time and time again. Often at the call of fire the men had been turned out at night, every man bringing his blanket and buckling on his cutlass. The pumps would be manned, and on one or two occasions Captain Porter had built a "smudge" down in the hold, and the crew had not known whether it was a real fire or not they had been called upon to assist in putting out. So frequently had this drill been held that the men reached their stations without the least confusion.

It had been observed that the prisoners had been

holding communication with one another, and there had been much whispering among them during the second day after the capture. The berth deck and hold were filled with them. It was impossible to put them under gratings without much discomfort, and they had mingled with the Essex's crew or sat about in groups, fretting somewhat under the rough joking of their captors.

At twelve o'clock at night, three days after the capture, David Farragut awoke in his hammock. He felt that some one was standing near him, and, without raising his head, slowly he opened his eyes. A tall, tow-headed man was bending over him; a pistol was grasped in his right hand.

David recognized the fellow as one of the prisoners, the cockswain of the captain's gig of the Alert. Instantly the idea crossed his mind that the English were preparing for an uprising to take the vessel. But he knew that if he moved it would be the very worst thing he could do, so he pretended to be asleep, and after a close scrutiny the man passed on.

No sooner had he left than David sprang to the deck; without stopping to put on his uniform, he ran up the ladder, and, running past the man at the wheel, he plunged without knocking into Captain Porter's cabin. He awakened the latter quickly, and breathlessly told him what he had seen.

Captain Porter took in the situation in an instant.

"Run forward to the bell," he said, "and make the signal."

At the same time he rushed out on the quarter-deck.

"Fire, fire!" he cried, in his loud, commanding voice.

The ship's bell had commenced a loud, continuous clanging. The men tumbled up from below, reaching their stations as quickly as they could, pushing to one side the astonished prisoners, who were so dumfounded by the goings on that their calculations were upset completely. Instead of finding a half-sleeping crew and only the lookout and the watch to overcome, here, at various parts of the ship, were standing armed men ready for duty; and all this in the space of two minutes!

As soon as the bell stopped its clatter, the boarders were called to the hatchways and the discomfitted Englishmen were crowded below into the hold.

It was found that somehow they had broken into a chest of arms. Had it not been for this constant drill and the prompt action of the little midshipman, perhaps the Essex would never have sailed upon the cruise into distant seas, the events of which make up most of this history.

When all the excitement was over, Captain Porter called David to him. He placed his hand on the boy's head. For an instant it seemed that he was going to put his arm about him.

"David," he said, "you are a good lad, and some day you will have a ship of your own; and I trust," he added, "that you will have as brave and true people about you as I can count on here in the Essex."

Making a cartel of the Alert and paroling all of the officers and most of the seamen, Captain Porter placed Lieutenant McKnight in charge of the captured vessel, and she was sent to Halifax, for they were not many miles from the coast of Nova Scotia.

One other interesting episode occurred before the Essex returned home to refit.

Off the shore of Long Island, as she was making her way for New York Harbor, the lookout reported three sails in sight dead ahead—two smaller vessels apparently in pursuit of a larger one. Through the glass it could be made out that they were not merchantmen. The Essex overhauled them fast, but, becoming a little suspicious, Captain Porter took in his sail and kept his distance.

All at once one of the vessels broke out into a sheet of flame. The other replied; and soon the three were shrouded in a white cloud of cannon smoke that drifted low across the water and hid all but the topmasts of the vessels that apparently were fighting furiously.

"It's an action!" said Midshipman Farragut, jumping up and down in his excitement. "Oh, why don't we

crawl in? It may be an American vessel that is being attacked."

Kingsbury, Joseph Hawley, and another boatswain's mate, were standing quite close by. All of the officers were discussing the situation grouped together on the quarter-deck.

"Action my eye!" said the old seaman, half addressing Hawley and half speaking to the midshipman. "They're trying to do to us what we did to the Alert. That's a Yankee trick. There ain't no real fighting going on."

Owing to the Essex being to windward, the noise of the cannonade could not be heard, but apparently it was a great deal of powder they were burning. The officers had discovered some suspicious appearances also, and Captain Porter determined to put matters to a test. He displayed the American flag at the peak and fore, fired a gun, and, instead of running down, stood off and away with all sails set. Instantly the surmising and doubts were set at rest. The bogus battle stopped at once.

The three vessels came about on the wind and set sail in chase of the Essex. There were two frigates and a brig. There was no fear of being overtaken in Captain Porter's mind, for his vessel could show a clean pair of heels to anything that floated, the Constitution, perhaps, being the only ship that could sail even with her.

One of the approaching Englishman (all doubts of

The young midshipman discovers a man-o'-war.

(See page 24.)

their nationality were set at rest) outsailed the others, and, as it was growing dark and the weather was very thick, Captain Porter determined upon a bold line of action.

"I tell you what," said Midshipman Cowan, as he was taking off his wet clothes, for it was raining hard and he had just come off watch, "there is something going on. You will see if old Logan (this was Captain Porter's nickname) hasn't got something up his sleeve; we are shortening sail."

"Then that headmost frigate must be close to us," said Midshipman Conover, who was the smallest of the lads next to David.

"Here comes Mary. Let's see what she says," put in Middy Odenheimer, who was bending over his sea chest.

A boy with light-brown hair came down the ladder. It was Midshipman Tittermary.

"Say, you fellows," he remarked, "all hands will be called in a little while. I think we are going to have another joke."

In truth warfare had seemed a great deal of a joke to the crew of the Essex so far, for they had not lost a man.

No sooner had he spoken than the call for all hands sounded.

"The Captain is going to make a speech," said Midshipman Cowan.

They found the crew gathered in the waist. Cap-

tain Porter was standing near the wheel. It was raining, but no one seemed to mind it. There was dead silence.

"Men," the Captain said, "I think we can take this frigate that is close upon our heels if we work together. My intention is to put about and make straight for her. The other vessels may run past us in the dark. I don't wish to have a light on board this ship. Every man will be provided with a white badge on his cap and his left arm, so we can tell each other in the dark. Are you ready for it?"

The cheer that followed must have made Captain Porter's heart beat high.

Instantly the badges, which had been made in the wardroom, were distributed, and the Essex tacked and stood in the direction of the oncoming Englishman. There was a fever of suppressed excitement.

"Well, Kingsbury," said David, as he passed the old mate, "what do you think of this idea?"

Old William paused. "Mr. Farragut," he said in a low voice, "I tell you what, sir, that Britisher's coming at the rate of eight or ten knots. We are traveling three or four. If we strike her we will be upon her before we know it. Mark my word, sir, it will strip us both. We will see them masts coming out like blades of grass, and there'll be a tall amount of slaughter. I don't like it, sir."

He lowered his voice, but he never would have flinched; nor would any one of the crew, even had

they seen the great shape of the other vessel loom forth in the darkness.

The Acaster (this was the name of the English ship) must, however, have passed astern of the Essex, and in the morning the three sails were out of sight.

Instead of sailing for the harbor of New York, Porter shaped his course for the Capes of the Delaware, and in ten days came to anchor off the town of New Castle. Not long did he lie idle. In a few days it was "Up anchor" and "Ho! and away" for strange countries to the southward. The Essex was ordered to cruise off South America.

CHAPTER VII.

FROM SUN TO SNOW.

AGAINST the tall palms, entangled vines and foliage that grew in tropical abundance to the water's edge, arose the tall masts of a man-of-war. The surface of the bay was as calm and smooth as a mirror. From the neighboring forest strange cries called and echoed. Beautifully plumaged birds fluttered out of the high branches, and strange monkeys swung themselves to and fro in the tree tops.

It was the Brazilian coast. The place was a little harbor known as St. Catherine's and the tall-masted frigate was the Essex.

So calm was the surface that the reflection of the ship seemed to stretch away down beneath her, and so clear was the water that if you looked over the side you could see odd-looking fish and long, waving sea grass, or occasionally a huge white-vested shark with his evil-looking eyes glancing upward. Now and then a rakish-looking fin extended above the surface, and woe be it to any poor Jacky who tumbled overboard.

A longboat was pulling out from a little cove. She

was laden almost to the gunwales with piles of wood and filled water casks. The men at the oars swung slowly back and forth. A little midshipman, with a wide straw hat shading his eyes, was perched in the stern sheets. He was sunburned and browned and changed a little, but no one would have failed to recognize David Farragut. Despite the heat, he was sitting with his back straight and his head erect.

"Way enough there!" he called to the men. "Boat your oars."

The heavily laden cutter came neatly to the frigate's side, and David climbed up the ladder and came on deck to report.

The awnings were spread forward and aft, and there was a smell of tar and blistering paint. Walking along the quarter deck, he approached an officer who was standing in the shade of a sagging wind sail.

"Last boat alongside, Mr. Wilmer," he said, saluting.

"Very good, sir," was the answer. "Hurry the people with the cargo, and get your boat in at the davits. We will probably try to get out with the evening breeze."

The singing of the windlass hoisting the wood and the casks over the side quickened in its time. The last load is the lightest always, and in a few minutes more the cutter was hauled from the water against the great wooden davits. Then all hands rested, and

soon the shadows of the trees crept farther and farther out from shore, and the cries of the birds and beasts seemed to redouble as the sun, glowing and red, sank down in the west.

A long canoe paddled by five or six dark-skinned men came about a point of land and approached the Essex. A piratical-looking man with a long black mustache stood up. He answered the hail of the lookout in a jargon of Spanish and Portuguese.

"Here, send for some one who can speak to this fellow," said Mr. Wilmer, who was officer of the deck.

Middy Odenheimer could speak Spanish. He stepped to the gangway and listened attentively to what the man was saying.

"He is one of those rascally pilots, Mr. Wilmer," he replied. "It may be that he is speaking the truth. He says that there is an English ship twice as big as ours only a few miles off the point."

The Bay of St. Catherine's was a bad place to be caught in, but, luckily, darkness was coming on quite fast, and with it a breeze from land sprang up. It dimpled the waters, and caused the sighing of the great deep forest to be plainly heard as an undercurrent to the humming and chattering of its myriad forms of life.

Soon another sound broke the stillness. It was a shanty song accompanied by the shrill piping of a fife. The men were running about the capstan, and the clicking and rattling of the cable as it poured through

the hawse pipes and down into the hold showed that Captain Porter was not going to linger in this uncertain position.

In a few minutes more the Essex tripped her anchor and slowly gathered headway toward the sea. She passed the cape, squared away, and stood farther out, but nothing was seen of the line-of-battle ship which she was endeavoring to escape from. It was supposed, however, that the latter was the Montague, a seventy-four.

It seemed that the Essex must have been launched under a lucky star. Already had she sent home three or four prizes of minor importance, and one that was very rich, being the British Government packet Nocton, in whose hold was discovered fifty-five thousand dollars in specie.

When Captain Porter had left the Capes of the Delaware he sailed under orders to join Commodore Bainbridge's squadron, which was then in Brazilian waters. But if he failed to meet his superior at any one of the rendezvous appointed, he was to set sail on a cruise of his own at his own discretion.

St. Catherine's was the last place where he hoped he might fall in with the Constitution (Bainbridge's flagship), and so now he was free to go where he pleased.

There is no time to tell of the fun and frolic held on board the Essex when she had crossed the equator; crossing the line has been told very many times; but

the midshipmen enjoyed it all, and the antics of old Kingsbury as Neptune, and Phœbe, the old darky, as his buxom wife, were long to be remembered.

Captain Porter was now shaping his course for that test of the seamanship in the old sailing days—rounding the Horn.

The weather grew colder as they sailed down the coast of Patagonia. The light clothing which David and the rest of the lads had been wearing in Brazil had been changed for greatcoats and double trousers.

Now for a while the good luck of the Essex seemed to have deserted her. For twenty-one tiresome days she beat to and fro, encountering adverse winds and currents, heaving-to often at night, to find herself miles and miles back of where she was in the morning. But there was no immediate danger—nothing but discomfort—until one day, the 3d of March, 1813.

David was on the forecastle superintending getting in the foresail (it had been ripped in a blow the night before); the sea was running high, when suddenly he saw, a mile away, a great wall of water topped with white, rearing against the whole horizon line. The ship was yawing to and fro, as she was in a cross-current, and was carrying little sail. At once David saw the danger.

"Hard aport!" he shouted, running aft as tight as he could foot it.

The men at the wheel could see nothing, but the spokes flew around and the Essex slowly answered.

They had seen in the face of the little midshipman something that had warned them to be quick; but just as the Essex swung about, the current caught her and again she fell off to leeward. At the same moment, before a word of warning could be called, the great sea was upon them. It rose higher than the bowsprit, and with a rush and roar caught the frigate almost on her side and tumbled over the bulwarks in a great mass of green and white on to the deck.

David grasped a rack and hung on tightly. The lee quarter boat went off the davits and smashed to pieces. The water poured in cataracts down the hatchways, and before he knew it the little midshipman was swept off his feet, half drowned, and bumped down the ladder to the gun deck below. There he saw a curious sight. The row of ports from the bow to the quarter were stove in to a great gaping wound. The guns were slued this way and that, but most fearful of all was the terror and confusion that for an instant reigned among the crew. Many seamen, brave men and tried, were on their knees, making what they thought to be their last prayer. But the wind had caught the Essex so she heeled over the other way, and the water was pouring out through the farther ports.

Suddenly above the confusion a voice sounded like the roar of a lion. It hardly seemed that a human throat could make such sounds.

"Avast there! Put your best foot forward, my

hearties! There's one side of her left yet!" were the words.

Old William Kingsbury had come to the front in proper fashion. The effect was wonderful. The men jumped to their feet. Four or five officers came running down from above, and like bees the crew went to work.

A sail was lowered over the bows and by great exertion the water that had been pouring in was kept outside, where it belonged, and in half an hour it was easier to breathe.

The next day, as if to make up for the blow they had delivered, the elements were kinder. The wind changed, the sea went down, and the Essex, after three weeks' buffeting about, and almost despair to all on board, passed the dangerous point and swept on into the waters of the Pacific.

The crew were called on deck (it is said that Captain Porter always knew the right time to make a speech), and there they were thanked in a few heartfelt words, and those that had been foremost in their duty the day before were promoted on the spot. Unfortunately, there was no post left for William Kingsbury, but the Captain took his hand before all the crew, and the old sailor fairly blushed.

The wind that sprung up held good and ran the Essex up to the island of Mocha, near the coast of Chili, and here she came to anchor. Provisions had run scarce, and the men were on half rations. The

island abounded with wild horses and hogs. The meat of the former was very much better than the pork, which was fishy and unpalatable.

On the first day David had landed with Lieutenant McKnight and gone with a shooting party on the island.

It is strange sport stalking horses, but different conditions suggest different ideas, and the thought that these were the same patient friends of man did not enter his head. They were wild as deer, and after hard tack and salt meat their flesh seemed tender and juicy.

Unfortunately, a lieutenant of the Essex, in firing at a wounded horse, shot and mortally wounded a seaman named Spafford. The man's words when they picked him up were typical of the spirit which animated the crew. The poor lieutenant was crazed with grief, but the seaman only said, "Please carry me on board that I may die under my country's flag."

It is often the words of the lowest that express the very highest sentiments and animate others to fine deeds and actions.

The crew had a good run on shore, and then the Essex set sail for Valparaiso.

CHAPTER VIII.

IN THE PACIFIC.

AFTER leaving the harbor of Valparaiso the Essex sailed up the Chilian coast. It had happened that the commander of a Chilian coast-guard vessel had taken it into his hands to interfere with American commerce and had captured two or three American whalers.

This news was given to Captain Porter by a vessel that he met shortly after he left his last harbor, and it was the good fortune of the Essex to run across this corsair and to punish the commander in a way which taught him a lesson.

The Nereyda was a fifteen-gun sloop of war. She at first took the Essex for a merchantman, and, discovering her mistake too late, started to get away. The Yankee frigate quickly overhauled her and, without firing a gun, took possession. Throwing overboard all of her guns and ammunition, and leaving the captain only his lower masts to regain the port with, Captain Porter turned him loose.

On board the Nereyda were found the crews of two or three of the vessels she had captured. Learning that the last prize taken had only shortly before

started to the southward, the Essex set sail and overhauled a large whaling ship, the Alexander Barclay, and recaptured her, as she was under a prize crew.

Inside of three or four weeks the Essex was accompanied by a small fleet of prizes, made up of the whaler before mentioned and three large British ships—the Georgiana, the Montezuma, and the Policy, which were captured by a boat expedition during a calm.

The Georgiana was equipped as a cruiser and Lieutenant Downes was placed in command. He set out to the westward alone. The little squadron then made their way to Charles Island, one of the Galapagos group, to examine "the whalers' post office," a letter box nailed to a tree, in which visiting vessels left news of their whereabouts.

Here followed a month that for a long time David Farragut and all the midshipmen reckoned the happiest of their lives. They fished and caught seals and tortoises and grew fat and hearty. The crew were in fine condition, and the weather everything that could be wished for.

But at last, having filled up with wood and water and fresh provisions, the squadron set sail, the Essex capturing a large vessel named the Atlantic when only a few days out.

They had been anchored but a short time in the bay of Guayaquil when the Georgiana returned from her cruise. She brought three more prizes with her—the Rose, the Catherine, and the Hector. The At-

lantic being the finest one of the captured vessels, the Georgiana's armament was shifted to her and she was rechristened the Essex, Jr.

There were now nine vessels in the squadron. Officers to command the prizes being scarce, the midshipmen were called upon, and, to his intense surprise, David Farragut had been sent for to go to Captain Porter's cabin. When he had left a few minutes later he could hardly believe that the orders he had heard were true. At the age of twelve years he had been appointed prize master of the Barclay, the vessel that had been recaptured from the Spanish "guarda costa." And now followed an interesting chapter in the midshipman's life.

David had transferred his little sea chest to the Barclay. He occupied one half the cabin, while the former captain of the vessel, who still was kept on board, took up the other.

It was very fortunate for the boy commander that the majority of the prize crew was composed of stanch seamen who had sailed with him the previous year; otherwise most disagreeable consequences might have followed.

Joseph Hawley, the messmate of old William Kingsbury, had been sent on board as acting quartermaster. When the signal to set sail had been shown from the Essex, David was asleep down in the cabin. The ex-captain of the Barclay, a cross old curmudgeon, refused to notice the midshipman's presence, and had sat up almost

all the night smoking and grumbling on the quarter-deck.

David was awakened by feeling some one touch him lightly on the shoulder. Looking up, he saw that it was Hawley.

"Mr. Farragut, they're flying a signal to get under way, sir, but I fear there will be some trouble. Hadn't you better come on deck, sir?"

David jumped into his clothes. As he ran up the companion ladder he saw the old captain standing at the top with his arms folded. He wished him a cheery good morning, and hastened to the rail. He was so short that he had to step up on a gun carriage to look over it.

There were all the vessels, some under way and the others with their anchors up and down, and their sails shaking out from the yards. The Barclay was lying almost a mile farther inshore than were the rest. There had evidently been no attempt to get up her anchor, and the men were standing talking in groups and casting furtive glances at the quarter-deck. What did it mean?

The midshipman had received his orders the day before, and knew that at the signal to sail he was to clear away in the wake of the Essex for the harbor of Valparaiso. He turned to the older man, who was a giant, standing almost six feet four inches, with tremendous shoulders and a shock of wiry gray hair. He looked down at the little midshipman approaching him.

"Captain Randall," said David, trying to control his

voice (although, to tell the truth, a great fear welled into his heart), "order all sail to be made and follow those vessels to the westward."

The captain thrust his hands into his pockets. He gave a whistle and then an ugly, sneering laugh.

"Listen to the little monkey," he said, "that presumes to give me orders!"

"My orders are from Captain Porter," responded David. "We must set sail for Valparaiso."

"More likely to New Zealand!" responded Captain Randall. "This is my vessel, and I take her where I please."

David wished that he were a man, but he knew that the moment had come when he should show the crew that he was an officer, no matter if he was but twelve years old.

"I order you, sir," he said, his voice trembling, "to make sail on this vessel."

Four or five of the men had stepped aft. They were within earshot; among them David noticed Hawley. He knew he could depend upon him. The captain had laughed again, and had said something in which David caught the words "long clothes." His anger had now overcome his fear entirely. Turning his back upon the captain, he looked at the group of seamen.

"Get up the anchor and be lively!" he shouted; and he gave the rest of the orders for preparing to make sail.

"Aye, aye, sir!" said Hawley, touching his cap. "You command this vessel, Mr. Farragut."

There was a moment of hesitation, but three or four of the crew jumped at once to the capstan. Captain Randall did not issue any orders to the contrary, but he turned furiously and made for the head of the companion way.

"I'll shoot the first man who dares to touch a rope," he muttered. "I'll get my pistols, you little monkey. We'll see who commands this vessel!" He hurried down below.

David called to the quartermaster. He knew there were four or five men that he could absolutely rely upon, and he knew that to keep his authority he must be firm.

Hawley and another seaman came running. The capstan was clicking merrily by this time and the Barclay was walking up to her anchor.

"Mr. Hawley," said David, giving the quartermaster a handle to his name, "if that man comes up from below, I order you to heave him overboard."

The transom to the cabin was open and David shouted down to Captain Randall.

"You're under arrest, sir!" he cried, "and ordered to keep your cabin. If you come on deck you do so at your peril."

The crew had heard this speech. The admiration for the boy who had so suddenly become a man seemed to overcome all tendencies toward mutinous conduct. They scampered up the shrouds and took his piping orders and answered them as willingly as if they had been roared in old Kingsbury's lion voice.

In half an hour the Barclay had laid her course in pursuit of the division of the fleet led by Lieutenant Downes in the Essex, Jr.

Captain Randall did not reappear that day or the next. On the third the Barclay had crept up with the fleet and had got within hailing distance of the Essex, Jr. David spoke her at once and requested that he might be allowed to send a boat on board. It had fallen quite calm and the little fleet was drifting about hither and thither when David lowered away his gig.

He and the captain had not met at mess since the affair of a few days previous, but now the latter came up on deck and requested somewhat sarcastically that he be allowed to be taken on board the flagship to speak to Lieutenant Downes.

David allowed him to step into the gig, and the captain, who for some reason was affecting great amusement, took his seat in the stern sheets beside him.

As soon as they had boarded the Essex, Jr., David made his report. Captain Randall stood by, apparently much amused.

"Why, Lieutenant Downes," he put in at last, "I was only trying to frighten the youngster; I meant nothing serious."

"You might tell Lieutenant Downes how well you succeeded, sir," spoke up David.

"Hear him! I like his spunk," answered Randall, who appeared to be a little nervous notwithstanding. "Come, we might as well be friends. You will need my

help. Let's return. It was all a joke. You'll need me to help you handle the old hooker. I know her tricks and manners."

David ignored this latter speech and turned to Lieutenant Downes.

"Am I prize master of the Barclay?" he asked.

"You are, sir," was the laconic response, "and as such you have command."

"Very good, sir," answered David. "Captain Randall, you may return with me, or not, as you see fit."

The older man was flustered.

"I think I had better go with you, Mr. Farragut," he answered.

And the case being settled to David's satisfaction, the boat was called away and they returned to the Barclay.

Strange to relate, Captain Randall, if he had at first intended the whole affair as a joke, kept it up most successfully, for he and the young commander dined together that night in the cabin, and David sat at the head of the table. Until the Barclay arrived at Valparaiso, Randall took orders from his superior with as much gravity as if David, instead of standing four feet eight inches, was seven feet tall and broad in proportion.

As for the crew, they had nicknamed him "The Little Commodore," and were as eager to please him as though he held in his power the gift of high promotion.

Refitting at Valparaiso, they sailed again and joined the Essex at the island of Albemarle.

Porter had taken three more prizes—the ships New

Zealand, Seringapatam, and the Sir Andrew Hammond.

"The Little Commodore" removed his chest from the Barclay and once again became the humble midshipman who played blindman's buff in the steerage. Odenheimer, Isaacs, Ogden, and Tittermary welcomed him back, and the first night of his return the boys whispered long in their hammocks. There was sad news: poor Cowan was ill in the sick bay.

CHAPTER IX.

A LUCKY SCRAPE.

"I THINK it's a shame," said Midshipman Odenheimer, who was one of the largest and oldest of the boys, "that the old man keeps us cooped up here and doesn't allow us to go ashore and see some of the fun or fighting. I am tired of mathematics and study. I should think he ought to know by this time that you and I can be trusted, David."

Midshipman Odenheimer had also served as an acting prize master, and felt a little bitter at being treated as an ordinary middy again.

David did not reply. He was lying full length on the deck, with his head against the end of a gun carriage. Through the open port a cool breeze was blowing.

It was late in the evening, and strange sounds were in the air—singing and chanting, weird and musical, and the rhythmic beating of time. This sound was made by the clapping of a hundred pairs of hands, and the song was one of the plaintive melodies sung by the natives of the island of Nukahiva, against whose shore, scarcely a biscuit-throw away from the deck of the Essex, Jr., the little waves were lapping softly.

But of course all this requires an explanation. The Essex had not remained long at the Galapagos. She had sailed away into the mystical and partly unknown archipelagoes of the mid-Pacific. Her present resting place was at this beautiful island, one of the Marquesas. Porter had named the bay Massachusetts Bay. For three weeks the fleet had been here at anchor and strange happenings had followed.

The natives, a kindly people with light-brown skins and comely, well-proportioned bodies, had met the Americans with open arms. The island tribes were divided into four or five different clans. The Tachas, the Happahs, and the Shonemes were tribes that lived near the coast and that welcomed Porter's fleet with every demonstration of affection and hospitality.

But these last tribes were at war with the Typees, a tribe of the inland, warlike and strong. Porter had formed an alliance with the seacoast natives, and at the time at which this chapter opens was waging a successful war in their behalf against the Typees.

But the midshipmen, much to their disgust and annoyance, had not been allowed to take any part in these land ventures, and had been cooped up on board the Essex, Jr., closely kept at their studies. Occasionally, of course, they were allowed runs on shore, but the crews of the vessels and the prisoners were given almost complete liberty, and lived in a village of their own built in a beautiful forest of breadfruit trees and spreading shade palms.

But to go back to the two lads lolling on the deck of the Essex, Jr.

The song which had been welling louder and louder suddenly ended, and a new chorus arose seemingly from all about the anchored fleet. The boys crawled to an open port and gazed out. It was a great sight. The calm waters of the bay were thronged with canoes drifting to and fro like pleasure boats on a pond. In the stern a native would be lazily paddling, while, lying about in comfortable positions, the others were singing in chorus the plaintive song that had answered the one from shore. It was the sailor's paradise; "the fiddler's green" of his dreams, where all is music and dancing, tobacco, and easy times. Captain Porter was giving a vacation to the crew that had stood by him so nobly through the hardships of Cape Horn and the many dangerous expeditions into which he had ventured.

"I wish we could get ashore," said Midshipman Odenheimer. "I am sick of being cooped up here."

"Listen!" said David; "there's one of our men singing."

A great fire was jumping up against the dark shadows of the trees, and the group of natives seated around it showed plainly. The white uniforms of the Yankee sailors mingled among them. The native music had stopped, but in a clear barytone a sea song now struck up.

"It is Boatswain Bill," went on Midshipman Farragut. "He's singing 'The Isles of Cathay.'"

"I can't stand this any longer," said Odenheimer. "I don't think there would be much done to us if we took French leave. Whist! I have it. We are not on duty until to-morrow morning. Let's off with most of our duds and overboard and spend the night on shore."

No boy is perfect; the temptation was strong. Many times had the midshipmen done it before, but Farragut had resisted all inducements to join in the nocturnal liberty parties. Odenheimer had kicked off his shoes.

"Come along, David," he said. "No one will find us out. Come on."

David shook his head.

"Well, then, good-by, and here goes for it!"

Odenheimer leaned out of the port. A rope swung from the bulwarks overhead. He hooked it in with his feet and, grasping it, slid down to the water. It had grown so dark that David could just see his head and the motion of his arms as he struck out for the shore. Never was a boy so tempted before. It was two days now since he had set his feet on land. The chances were that they could swim back to the ship without detection; but he hesitated.

All at once he heard a bubbling cry. Odenheimer was not the best of swimmers. David remembered once how tired he had become when they were in bathing, and how he had almost foundered before they could get him into shallow water. He listened attentively. Again the bubbling sound! To his ears it seemed a cry, half

inarticulate, for help. Perhaps Odenheimer had caught a cramp; perhaps he was in danger!

The anchor watch, composed of one man only, who was walking up and down the forecastle, heard a plash alongside. He did not even turn to look. It was none of his business if the midshipmen desired to have some fun, and, as there was no reason for him to worry, he only paused and then resumed his beat.

The plash was occasioned by Midshipman Farragut going head first out of the open port. When he came to the surface he looked at first in vain for Odenheimer. At last he saw something white gleaming a rod or so astern of the great shadow of the ship. Hand over hand he struck out for it. It was Odenheimer struggling faintly. David grasped him by the collar. It was nearer to the shore than to the vessel, and he swam with all his strength until he felt the steeply shelving beach beneath his feet. His friend was coughing and spluttering badly, and with some difficulty waded out to the dry, warm sand. There was something that excited David's suspicions and he felt his anger rising. Had it been a ruse of Odenheimer to get him to forget his duty? No sooner had the idea crossed his mind than he spoke quickly.

"You're shamming!" he said, "and you did it to get me to come with you. You're bigger than I am, but, by sixty, if it is so, I'm going to punch your head!"

Odenheimer *had* been shamming, but he saw that the

best way out of it was to make no answer. He coughed and spluttered harder than ever, and the suspicion faded from David's mind.

"I beg your pardon for what I said," he whispered, and thumped his friend hard between the shoulders. The choking ceased and Odenheimer rolled over on his back.

"Whew! That was a narrow squeak," he said. "Do I owe my life to you?"

"Pshaw!" said David, who now wished to make light of it, "it was nothing. Cheer up; you're all right."

The boys had landed near the collection of huts which were occupied by the prisoners that the Essex and her consort had taken from the vessels that lay at anchor under guard in the harbor. The men were not kept in close confinement. They were allowed to walk about at will within a certain proscribed place, the only difference between them and the Essex's crew being that the latter were armed and were distinguished by having white badges with the ship's number marked upon them. At the narrow causeway that led to the prisoners' village (their huts were on a little island) stood a marine with a musket.

"We might as well make an evening of it," said Odenheimer. "Let's go down where we can see some of the fun."

David's conscience was clear of any willfulness, and he could see no reason why he should not acquiesce. In

The Essex and squadron at Nukahiva. (From a picture drawn by Captain Porter.)

fact, a strange excitement made his heart beat quickly. Stolen sweets have a zest and a flavor that no one appreciates more than a boy of twelve. They knew they could gain the farther camp if they could slip by the sentry. So they stole along the beach, Odenheimer leading, and dodged into the thicket of bushes. Suddenly the midshipman paused and raised his hand with a gesture of silence and attention. There was a murmur of voices coming from off the left and a light glimmered through the trees. Stepping anxiously, they worked their way in that direction. To their surprise they found they had stumbled across a meeting of the prisoners and that something unusual was on foot. The men were gathered in a circle close together, and a lantern burning dimly swung from the low branch of a tree. A tall, light-haired Englishman was talking in a loud whisper and pounding his right hand into the hollow of his left to emphasize his words.

"It could be done," he said. "All that can swim take for the ship. The rest of us, disguised as natives, can go out in a canoe; and once alongside, we can overpower them; they're not many. Then up sail and away for a cruise on our own account. What say you, lads? Are you all with me? Will it be to-night or to-morrow?"

"To-night, before dawn," spoke up one of the group seated on the ground; "no good of caution—dash wins the day."

The boys listened with their hearts beating wildly.

Perhaps it was some kindly fate that had guided them in their midnight escapade.

"Back to the ship at once!" whispered Odenheimer in David's ear.

The boys groped their way through the bushes. Just as they reached the beach they heard behind them the sound of some one rushing through the underbrush in their direction. The noise of their retreat had probably been heard.

"Dive for it," said Odenheimer in a whisper.

There came the sound of two sudden plunges, then all was silent. A big man emerged from the brush and stood listening to the sound from the waters. The boys swam as long as they could without coming to the surface, but at last both heads bobbed up to view.

"Who is that out there?" shouted the man. It was the boatswain's mate of the captured Montezuma.

The only reply was a laugh and a few unintelligible words, for on the spur of the moment David had recalled to mind a few native sentences he had learned.

The tall figure had been joined by another.

"I dare say you are mistaken, Jock," said the second comer. "It is only two young niggers out in the water."

The boys struck out for the ship. They had not gone very far when Odenheimer turned.

"There is some one swimming after us," he said. "Can't you hear him?"

It was a fact. The man's suspicions had been excited and he thought he had detected an English accent in

the strange jargon that had answered his first hail. The boys could hear the long measured strokes and the steady breathing of some one following them swiftly in the water—a strong swimmer evidently, for he gained upon them rapidly.

"We will never make the ship before he catches us," whispered Odenheimer. "What shall we do?"

David turned; he could see the face now plainly and the water rippling against the man's chin. At first he thought it might be one of the Kanakas, but now he perceived it was one of the English prisoners. His strong arms were kicking up a wake like that made by a pair of sweeps.

"Heigh, there! Who are you and what are you doing?" panted the pursuer, who was now only a dozen or so feet away.

Odenheimer turned this time and David caught the look on his face; it was that of a cornered animal.

"Let's at him, youngster," he said, and plashed toward the astonished Englishman.

The man was taken by surprise. He half swung about just as Odenheimer twisted his strong young arms about his neck, uttering a shriek of desperate fear and anger. He had caught the man just right, for his back was turned to him, and every effort the Englishman made to free himself but lifted his antagonist out of the water. How it would have terminated would have been hard to conjecture, but the rattle of oars and a sudden hail came from the direction of the Essex, Jr.

"What's going on out there?"

David's answer was a cry for help. A boat manned by three men pulled out of the darkness, and in another minute Odenheimer and the now exhausted seaman were hauled over the gunwale. David himself crawled in by the aid of an extended oar.

The Englishman was well-nigh drowned. He lay in the stern sheets choking and groaning weakly.

"Why, it is two of our midshipmen!" said one of the seamen, bending down close to look at Odenheimer.

"Where is Mr. Downes?" panted David.

"He has just returned to the ship, sir," answered one of the men. "We rowed him off to the ship, sir."

They had pulled to the gangway and three or four of the foremast hands came down to meet them. They carried Odenheimer and the prisoner up on deck.

Lieutenant Downes was standing at the lantern that hung against the mainmast. David walked up to him.

"Mr. Downes," he said, "we took French leave, but there is something of importance we have to tell. The prisoners are planning to retake the Essex, Jr."

"They brought one with them, sir," put in the seaman who had hauled David into the gig.

"Perhaps he can give us some information," said Lieutenant Downes, looking at the exhausted man who was being lifted to his feet.

But not a word could they get from him. He had recovered his senses and stood there glowering at the boys in silence.

"Go below, young gentlemen, and get on dry clothes and report on deck. You will tell your story to Captain Porter himself," Mr. Downes said curtly.

Then the lieutenant turned to a quartermaster standing near.

"Turn out the guard," he ordered, "arm all hands, and call away the gig."

In half an hour the boys were standing before Captain Porter's table in the cabin of the Essex.

Lieutenant Downes had said nothing about the matter of leaving the ship; he had merely introduced the subject by stating that the two midshipmen had captured one of the prisoners in the water and that there was a plan to take the Essex, Jr.

The Commander thanked them in few words, and immediate preparations were made so that closer surveillance of the prisoners' settlement might be made. Nothing further, however, was heard of the plot. The strange capture of the ringleader had apparently had a discouraging effect upon them.

The next morning at daylight the Essex, Jr., was moved farther from the shore. As she was about to drop anchor in her new berth, signals flew from the flagship. At the entrance to the bay a strange sail was seen hove to, and evidently surveying the mysterious fleet anchored farther inshore. Soon an order was received from Captain Porter for the Essex, Jr., to get under way and ascertain who the interloper was. The latter had now become suspicious; she had spread all

her canvas and was making off to the southward. The Essex, Jr., cleared the point and rounded on her track. But a stern chase is a long one, and as Midshipman Farragut looked back at the island he did not know what a strange adventure was before him.

CHAPTER X.

AN EXCHANGE OF CREWS.

THE wind that had carried the cruiser out of the bay held some three hours strong and fair, but the strange vessel ahead had proved herself a clever traveler, and the Essex, Jr., gained but little. All at once the wind changed and they caught it from different directions. Then followed what is often seen at sea—one vessel carrying the wind abeam, and another only a short distance in advance, wishing to hold the same course, carrying it on the quarter. This lasted a few minutes, during which time the Essex, Jr., pulled up rapidly.

As quickly as the counter breeze had sprung to life, however, it died away, and there the pursuer and pursued lay about a mile apart, idly drifting on the motionless surface.

As the evening came on, preparations were made on board the Yankee cruiser for getting out the boats and finding something definite about the chase, and as soon as it was dark two cutters were lowered silently over the side. Lieutenant Downes was in charge of one and David Farragut sat in the stern sheets of the other.

Getting the direction of the strange vessel, they pulled away. Their oars were wrapped in the rowlocks and made no noise.

All during the pursuit of the day the Essex, Jr., had flown the British flag, which had been answered by the stranger's displaying the same. Surprise is a great element of success in a boarding expedition in small boats, and it would have been foolish to have attempted reconnoitring in broad daylight.

David's cutter was slow, and although his men labored strongly at the oars, they could not keep pace with the lighter boat. It had grown very dark, and suddenly it was discovered that Captain Downes had disappeared. It would never do to hail, as they had traversed half the distance, in David's estimation, that lay between his ship and the stranger. So he called for "oars." The men ceased rowing; not a sound could be heard, and they started forward once again. For an hour they pulled ahead, occasionally stopping and listening, but without result. At last, hearing no shouts or firing, David presumed that the other boat had also missed the way or had returned to the Essex, Jr.

There was nothing to do now but wait for daylight. Making themselves as comfortable as they could, the men sat there in silence. It had been cloudy up aloft and there were no stars shining, which was a remarkable circumstance for the tropics, and David had noticed, as he had gone through the cabin before leaving the ship, that the barometer was falling rapidly.

All at once a vivid gleam lit up the horizon. It shot and quivered into the sky and was reflected through the clouds that apparently hung low to the southward. In that brief flash the men in the boat had seen ahead of them the dark outlines of the hull and spars of a ship not half a cable's length away; but whether it was their own vessel or the one they had set out to reconnoitre, they could not tell. Hawley, the boatswain's mate, was at the tiller. David turned to him.

"Was that lightning, Hawley?" he asked in a whisper; "and did you see the ship?"

"I did, sir," the man replied, "but I never saw lightning like that before."

As he spoke another gleam arose, red and straight, as though out of a lantern. It vibrated for a moment and then as suddenly went out. Once more the craft ahead stood out in strong relief. So calm was it that she might have been aground. The sails hung in straight lines from the yards; there was not a creak, or a movement, or a sound of life from her. After the second flash of light Hawley leaned forward.

"It is one of them burning mountains, Mr. Farragut," he said.

David had heard of volcanoes but had never seen one; he did not know how far the reflection would carry, and that the light he saw was a hundred miles away. But there were other things to think of now.

"We are going to board that vessel, Hawley," he whispered.

"Very good, sir. It's coming on to blow, I think," said the boatswain.

David shook the man nearest to him, who was asleep on the thwarts.

"Pass the word to get out your oars silently," he said. "Hawley, have you the direction of that vessel?"

"Aye, aye, sir," was the answer in a whisper.

The men were settling the oars in the rowlocks and stirring themselves sleepily. David stood up. He could hardly see the faces of those nearest him, but he made a little speech, pronouncing his words slowly and distinctly, just above his breath.

"Men," he said, "there's a vessel straight ahead. We don't know what she is, but we are going to take her. If she wants fight, she'll get it. If she surrenders, well and good."

He gave orders for two or three long, slow strokes to be pulled. Then called for "oars" again. The heavy cutter had gained headway and drifted slowly.

"Boat your oars!" said Midshipman Farragut.

There was not a sound as the heavy sweeps were laid on the thwarts. Suddenly there came a strange sensation. There was a little whispering in the bow and the cutter's headway stopped. The men on the port side were fending off with their hands, and so close was the hull of the silent vessel that David touched it also.

"It's our own ship, sir," said one of the men.

"Stop your jaw!" said Hawley. "It's not, Mr. Farragut. It's the stranger."

They were abreast of the chains, and bidding the men follow, David hauled himself out of the seat. A cheer broke out and the cutter's crew tumbled over the bulwarks.

It was a strange sight they saw. The binnacle light threw into dim relief a solitary figure at the wheel. David came close to him. The man did not move at first. Suddenly his face broadened into a grin.

"Well, by gosh!" he said. "Ye ain't no Britishers now, be ye?"

There was no mistaking the New Hampshire drawl.

"We are Americans," said David. "Where's your crew and who are you?"

"Captain Cyrus Peters," the man replied, "of the Yankee ship Albatross, and my crew is somewhere out there trying to cut your vessel out, by gosh! We never thought ye was a Yankee man-o'-war."

He threw his head back, and a laugh that might at least have been heard half a mile doubled him up like a jackknife.

"What vessel do you belong to, my young gentleman?" he inquired.

David responded by telling his ship, and, in a few words, what the squadron had been doing.

The men had been standing around chuckling and laughing among themselves when suddenly the skipper interrupted the goings on. He lifted his hand warningly.

"Hold on, by gum!" he said. "I thought that something was going to happen."

There had come a puff of heated air that lifted the great sails once and dropped them listlessly. The jibs rattled, and the ship's head paid off.

"We are going to have a blow," the captain said. "I feared it."

He jumped to the side and, making a trumpet of his hands, shouted out into the darkness:

"Ho, you Albatross's boats! Back to the ship, and lively!"

There came no answer. Then the hail was again repeated. This time a faint sound was heard, an answering call, and off to the north a small red spurt of flame ripped against the darkness. An instant later the report of a gun came booming over the water.

"That's a signal—the signal to return, Captain Peters," said David. "Have you a gun with which we can answer?"

"Aye, sir, there's one on the forecastle. I'm a little afeared of the two we have in the waist. But they're all loaded to the muzzle, sir. My crew is extra large, and we have been on half rations. I picked up a wrecked whaler in the Behring Sea."

A grizzled old tar (one of the three men that had remained with the captain on board the Albatross) disappeared into the galley. He came running out with a live coal between two sticks of wood.

"Now let the eagle scream!" he said.

The gun on the forecastle roared out, and a hail of scrap iron went hurtling and scattering over the sea. As if in answer to the flash, once more the red glare spread along the horizon to the south.

"We git answer from the old volcano," said Captain Peters with a grin. "By hemlock, here comes the wind!"

Again the yards had lifted and the foresail backed against the mast. The captain shouted out some orders. The men stood fast. A lantern had been lit at the entrance to the galley, and old Hawley approached David.

"The crew would rather take their orders from you, sir, if you please," he said, saluting.

The skipper had overheard it.

"Never mind me, youngster," he replied. "Come, bawl away! We'll git those headsails in. Snakes! I hope your vessel picked up my three boats; if not, Lord help them!"

David's shrill voice rang out. Hawley stepped to the wheel and Captain Peters was the first one to step to the loosened sheets. The men, with half a cheer for "Old Long Shanks," followed. It was not a moment too soon. As if it had been shot from the mouth of a cannon the wind came down upon them, and as suddenly as the toss of a huge blanket the sea rose up on every side. It was most unaccountable. Where such great waves could jump from it was hard to imagine. In an instant the vessel seemed to be in the midst of a caldron. The heavy cutter at her side was dashed to pieces, and, almost on her

beam ends, she answered her helm and forged up into the wind.

The men had come in from the bowsprit and were sliding down from aloft. Under the trysail and storm staysail, and the rest bare poles, the Albatross had now turned about and was going on the wind. So deep had she dipped into the tossing water that she had taken on board a huge sea forward, and Captain Peters, dripping wet, made his way aft.

"I've seen it before," he said—"once before in the harbor of Lisbon—kick up this same to-do. It is an earthquake, Captain Midshipman. You see we're in shallow water here."

He had shouted these words into David's ear. The latter, holding fast to the wheel with Hawley, tried to answer, but a fiercer gust blew the words away. There was a ripping sound, a loud report, and the staysail blew out in ribbons.

The stern of the Albatross seemed to lift into the air and her bow was buried so deeply that tons of water came roaring over into the waist. The captain had grasped the spokes of the wheel, and he and Hawley, by exerting all their strength, swung her head up a little. It was lucky that this had happened, for even in the darkness they could see a huge shape just to leeward of the point of the bowsprit.

"Missed her by the toss of a cap, Mr. Farragut," said Hawley. Every one had called aloud in fear.

Up to this time there had been no lightning, but a

great flash burst from overhead and they could see that the Essex, Jr., was alongside, almost yardarm to yardarm. She had drifted athwart their bows. A roar of thunder followed and then all was silent but for the tearing of the wind aloft.

"We will give her a wider berth," said Captain Peters, turning a spoke or two of the wheel. "No weather for kites, messmate!" he cried to Hawley. "Heaven grant they have my men aboard your vessel!"

On into the darkness forged the Albatross; in an hour or so dawn spread, and back to windward they could just make out the Essex, Jr., pitching and tossing in the heavy seas.

Before noon the wind and sea went down and land was sighted to the westward from the masthead. The Albatross squared away on a new course and sail was shortened.

The anxiety of the Yankee skipper had increased until he could do nothing but walk up and down the deck, working his long fingers nervously. Whether or not his boats had been picked up, he did not know, and it was painful to watch his expression as the Essex, Jr., drew up closer in the wake of the merchantman.

At last she was within hailing distance, and, following the etiquette of the service, David had to wait for his senior to speak him first.

Captain Peters could scarce contain himself now. His hands trembled so he could hardly hold the

telescope to his eyes; but suddenly he gave a whoop—

"Glory! Glory! Hallelujah!" he cried. "There's Pumpkin Billy, the carpenter. I can't mistake that face, by Davy Jones."

The bulwarks of the cruiser were crowded with heads, and in the foremast shrouds a dark knot of men were waiting.

Suddenly a tall man with a trumpet leaned out from the quarter-deck.

"Albatross, there! are our men on board of you?"

David had Captain Peters's trumpet to his lips; it hid half his face.

"All right, sir! All on board!" he called shrilly. "Have you the people of this ship?"

"Yes, safe and sound," was the answer.

A cheer broke out from the listening crews.

"I knowed it as soon as I saw Billy's phiz," said Captain Peters, cutting off a huge quid of tobacco.

By this time the two vessels were abreast of one another, and a great broad-shouldered man on the Essex, Jr.'s, forecastle lifted his elbows from the rail. His round face was almost twice the expanse of an ordinary person's, and, as if to heighten the effect, it was surrounded by bushy whiskers the color of a golden pumpkin for all the world.

He opened his lips and his voice crossed the wide space as if he were only a few feet away. Even Kings-

The Essex cuts out the bark.

(See page 30.)

bury's would have sounded like a piping child beside him.

"Oh, Cap'n Cy'," he said, "did ye get a wett'n'? We captured this ere craft. What'll we do with her?"

A roar of laughter broke out in which David joined. Captain Peters at his elbow chuckled and whispered:

"They say that Billy was going out to sea to be gone two years, and when they were a mile offshore he hallooed back and asked a girl to marry him. She waved a pocket handkerchief, and when he came back they was married."

David laughed again.

The land ahead was being rapidly raised, and now both ships broke out their light sails. It became a race to seek the anchorage. The masts of Commodore Porter's fleet could be seen, and the familiar peaks of Nukahiva towered up against the sky.

The Essex, Jr., slowly drew ahead, however, and entered the harbor first by only a few cables' lengths.

In the course of the explanations that followed, the rather amusing fact was developed that the Albatross's boats met the other cutter from the Essex, Jr., almost under the bows of the latter vessel, and that the anxiety felt during the sudden storm was only alleviated by the momentary glimpse of the Albatross that the flash of lightning gave.

CHAPTER XI.

FAREWELL TO NUKAHIVA.

THERE was very little chance for a lad to have his head turned or to become conceited in the service in those days. If he did what was at all remarkable, he received a few words of commendation; if he did only his duty, no thanks came to him; but if he shirked, or failed, there was no pity for him.

So although this was David's second command since he had reported on board the flagship, he received with a sense of pleasure Captain Porter's terse "You've done well, Mr. Farragut," when he became again a midshipman.

The war which had been going on in the interior of the island, and in which Captain Porter had assisted, mainly in the position of a peacemaker, was ended. The tribes had been brought into friendly relations toward one another, and all hands were now preparing to break anchorage and start upon another cruise.

During the absence of the Essex, Jr., on her chase of the Albatross (which latter vessel, of course, went on her way) the mutinous prisoners had been placed on board the ships and the ringleaders put in irons.

In describing this event Middy Odenheimer laughed.

"It was a sad joke to them—the prisoners, I mean," he said; "but even some of them were forced to smile. You should have seen "old Logan." He called them all on deck, and how polite he was! He thanked them for all they had done and for all their good intentions, and begged their pardon for not appreciating it more. He said that owing to its being manifest that they were not pleased at being left alone, they should become his guests, and he promptly ordered them below in the hold. I didn't know there were so many."

"He will make a cartel of one of the ships and send them to England, I suppose," put in Tittermary who was lolling back in his hammock, swinging himself to and fro with one hand on the deck beam.

"Well, he had better not give them any powder and shot; they'll turn pirates sure enough," answered Clark, "I wouldn't trust them, hull down."

The master at arms poked his head into the steerage.

"Lights out, gentlemen!" he said.

The lantern was extinguished, but the boys whispered on for some time in their hammocks, until the measured breathing of Odenheimer showed that he had fallen fast asleep.

"What in the world was that?" said David suddenly, starting up.

A grating noise came from the starboard side of the

steerage near the midshipman's chests; then a sound as if some one had dropped a coat or cap on the deck.

"Hush!" said Midshipman Ogden; "that's the old king rat. He's as big as a woodchuck. Something will have to be done, sure enough, to get rid of the beasts. Did you hang up your boots?"

"No," said David, slipping out of the hammock, "I forgot to."

Such a pest had the rodents become on board the Essex, Jr., and, in fact, on board of several of the other vessels, that it had reached a serious condition of affairs. They had eaten through several of the water casks, and, as was discovered upon investigation, had even gone deeply into the skin of the vessels themselves; and woe betide the pair of boots that was left where their sharp teeth could get at them.

"I heard one of the quartermasters say," said Odenheimer, "that we are going to smoke them out tomorrow. Mean work smoking out rats!"

The next morning preparations were made for getting rid of the vermin. All hands were called on deck. Stores that might spoil were moved up to the air. Smudges of sulphur and tar were laid in different parts of the ship in basins, ready to be set on fire.

Those in the hold were lighted first, and the heavy, sickening fumes rolled up the hatchway. A seaman with a burning match came coughing up the ladder.

David was on the berth deck superintending the disposition of the smudges, and had just seen the last one

lighted and was about to make a run for the hatch, when there arose a most peculiar shriek. Something dashed by him, striking against his legs and almost throwing him off his balance. Clark, who was half-way up to the spar deck, shouted out:

"David, David, it's Murphy! Didn't you hear him?"

Now, Murphy was the ship's pig, and he was a pig of no mean order. So thoroughly had he worked his way into the affections of the crew that, although pork was not tabooed as a staple of diet, and many other pigs were in close confinement, to have eaten Murphy would have been considered an act of rank cannibalism, and nothing less. He was not a pig with a pedigree, but certainly he had known a strange existence, and was the one surviving member of a litter that had been born on shipboard. On Sunday parade Murphy took his station with the rest of the crew, and he did this in such a matter-of-fact way that the men had ceased laughing at him. A number in a mess had been given him, and he had a little suit of sailors' clothes, even to the cap, made for him by the ship's tailor.

The idea of leaving poor Murphy down there in that smothering, choking place to die a frightful death never crossed David's mind. He turned and followed the squealing pig forward, and at last, choking and spluttering, cornered him at the bitts; but when he arose from his knees he was so dizzy and sick from the fumes that were thickening about him that he could

not make out the direction of the hatchway. All at once a voice roared down from above.

"Mr. Farragut, come out of that!"

There was an accent of fear in the tone, yet David's half-failing senses recognized old Kingsbury.

"All right!" David tried to answer, and stumbled.

A great figure, snorting and swearing volubly, tripped over him, and Kingsbury gathered him up in his arms and carried him, and Murphy also, up the ladder into the air and sunlight. Here all three lay upon the deck, gasping and choking for breath.

Of course all this goes to prove that David was, after all, nothing but a boy; but the risking of his life to save a pig did not detract from his popularity among the crew. However, for his pains he received a rating from Lieutenant McKnight, and for some hours he feared that his lungs would never cease paining him. But the rats were got rid of, and the traces and effects of their ravages were repaired.

As has been said before, the midshipmen had been allowed very little liberty on shore, but yet they had made the acquaintance of a few of the natives who visited the ships, and one in particular had become attached to the rescuer of Murphy. It was a young Hippah lad whose name was Tamaha. As was the custom among these kindly people, if they wished to show a mark of affection or respect, they requested permission to exchange names, and Tamaha had exchanged with David Farragut. Often had the boys

paddled together along the shallows and swam races during the bathing hours about the ships.

The young Hippah was tall and slender, with smooth, supple limbs and muscles that worked beneath his velvet skin like those of a panther. But he was kindly and affectionate, and, as was subsequently proved, his heart had gone out to the powerful white strangers who had visited his shores. He had picked up a few words of English and was a favorite with every one.

Early in December the water casks had been replenished. The crews had recommenced exercising at the guns, the Essex and the Essex, Jr., were rigged all ataunto, and the rumors of sailing had become a certainty; but there was to be one little exciting scene before they spread their canvas.

On Sunday, the 9th of December, as was the custom, the men exchanged visits. The forecastle is the pulse of the ship, and, from the mutterings and conversation, it was perceived that the crews of both vessels were in a feverish condition, for the life at Nukahiva had been a round of delight for the Jack-tars. They hated to give up the pleasures of the beautiful island, with its shady palm groves, fresh fruits, music and singing; and it was known that it was a final farewell they were to bid to "Fiddler's Green."

Exaggerated reports of this dissatisfaction reached the officers, and the question was discussed in Captain Porter's cabin.

On Monday David had transferred his chest and

small belongings to the Essex. He came on board in the morning watch. All the brass work shone in the early morning light. There was an air of expectancy, and yet suspense, throughout the vessel. The men talked in half whispers.

Before breakfast the drum beat and all hands were assembled on the spar deck. Captain Porter, accompanied by his officers, came out of the cabin. In his hand he carried a heavy brass-hilted cutlass. Glancing at his face, David saw that he was controlling himself with difficulty. His voice shook with anger as he gave orders for the crew to muster on the larboard side. Then he advanced to the capstan and placed the heavy cutlass upon it. For an instant he stood there with folded arms, gazing up and down the lines of faces. Some of the men shifted uneasily, but not a lip moved. There was not a man dared to attract attention to himself. One of the officers coughed nervously. At last the captain was speaking:

"All of you who are in favor of weighing anchor when I give the order, pass over to the starboard side. You who are of a different determination, stay on the larboard."

An instant of hesitation, and the whole crew to a man crossed the deck.

Captain Porter's voice rose.

"How is this?" he said. "Robert White, step forward!"

A pale-faced man, with a line of jet-black whis-

kers framing his heavy jaw, stood out from the crew.

"Did you not tell them on board the Essex, Jr., that the crew of this vessel would refuse to weigh anchor when I gave the order?" he questioned.

"No, sir," faltered the poor wretch, his hands clasping and unclasping nervously.

"You lie, you scoundrel!"

Porter turned to one of the officers.

"Read the list of men who visited the Essex, Jr., yesterday, Mr. Wilmer."

The officer did so, and as each man's name was called out he stepped forward. White was an Englishman who had joined the crew of the Essex from one of the prizes and had taken the oath.

To each of the assembled group Porter put the question:

"Did you not hear of this thing on board the Essex, Jr.?"

And each man replied, with a lift of his fingers to his cap:

"Yes, sir, I did."

White had wavered to and fro. It appeared for an instant as if he were going to faint. When the last man had answered the question, Porter reached for the heavy cutlass on the capstan.

"Run, you scoundrel, run for your life!" he cried.

The culprit needed no more to urge him. He sprang for the companion way. As he went through,

the toe of old Kingsbury's boot assisted him materially. There was a plash alongside, and he was seen striking out for the shore, when a canoe picked him up.

Porter smiled and placed the cutlass in a rack. A weight seemed to be lifted from his mind and he spoke to the men with the old hearty ring in his voice that always held them.

"Lads," he said, "you will stay by me. I can not thank you for doing your duty, but I shall say that I am proud of you."

Then he turned. His tone was almost gay now.

"Here, Johnny Bow," he cried, "up with you!"

A little sailor with a fiddle tucked under his chin mounted the capstan. The men with half a cheer set the bars into place, and Johnny Bow, with one foot stamping out the time, struck up "The girl I left behind me," and the lively rattle of capstan joined in an accompaniment.

From the quarter-deck the officers were bawling orders. The Essex walked up to her anchor and it rose out of the water steadily to the catheads; then the wind caught her head sails and she swung slowly about, her bow pointing seaward.

The Essex, Jr., followed suit. A cheer from the vessels left behind, and from the little fort that had been built on shore, was followed by a rousing one from the sailors of the Essex, who had caught the spirit of their commander.

It was a grand day. The sky was dotted with little

fleecy patches of white clouds. Never was a crew in such health and spirits. In the sick bay not a single man was present, nor had one reported at the doctor's call.

The Essex, Jr., and the frigate forged ahead to the westward and southward.—Farewell to Nukahiva, farewell to "Fiddler's Green!"

David, who was stowing his chest, suddenly heard his name called, and, looking up, he saw that Clark was standing close to him.

"Who do you suppose is on board this ship?" he asked quite eagerly.

"That is a strange way to put a question," replied David. "Give it up."

"Your namesake, David Farragut Tamaha!"

"No!" exclaimed David in surprise.

"I saw him in the forecastle not a moment since," put in Middy Isaacs. "He looks a trifle frightened. Perhaps he is searching for his brother."

David smiled. "I'll run up and see him," he said.

As he came up on deck he noticed that the wind had changed, and that the two vessels had gone about on the starboard tack. Off to the westward, its blue peaks rising against the clear sky, lay the beautiful island. Nearer was another and smaller one of the group, and farther away a third. So clear was the air that it seemed almost possible for a pistol shot to have reached them. Many of the men were sadly

gazing back, and many were probably wishing themselves there once more.

A slim, half-naked figure was crouching by the foremast. It was poor Tamaha. As soon as he saw David he arose and came nearer. His dark eyes had a frightened look and he was trembling from head to foot. David took the outstretched hand.

"Good!" he said. "You come with us."

"I go with you," Tamaha answered in his native tongue.

"We'll make a sailor of him, youngster," said one of the officers who was going by. "I'll see he draws some clothes from the slop chest."

It had fallen calm again and continued so until late in the evening. Early in the first night watch David came on deck. He was searching for Tamaha. A slight breeze had sprung up and the frigate had gathered headway. The men were hauling in the jib sheets when there came a sound of a few angry words and a scuffle from the forecastle. Ten minutes afterward a man came running aft. Hurriedly he saluted the officer of the watch.

"The native, sir—he's gone overboard; I judge some time ago!"

The helmsman threw the great ship up into the wind and all ran to the rail.

"Shall we lower a boat, sir?" asked a quartermaster.

"How far do you make it to the shore?"

"It's above twelve miles," was the reply.

"He'll make that all right. Let him go."

The helmsman turned the spokes of the wheel and the Essex paid off.

David dreamed that night that he had looked over the rail and that he could see the lift of the strong naked arms furiously striking out in the wilderness of water with that swift motion that makes the Pacific Islander the greatest swimmer in the world.

"Come back, Tamaha!" he had shouted.

The only answer in his dream had been a wave of the hand.

Strange to say, long afterward it was learned that Tamaha did reach home again after having swam some fifteen miles.

CHAPTER XII.

A SAILOR ON HORSEBACK.

NEW YEAR'S DAY of the year 1814 was passed on shipboard. The men of the Essex had again commenced the ceaseless drilling.

It was remarked in after years by many officers when they saw a seaman who was especially proficient with the cutlass, that "that man must have been on the Essex." Every detail of the drill was carefully attended to, and the stay on shore, the exercise and healthy food—all had placed the crew, as we have remarked before, in a fine state of health. The way they handled the great guns and scrambled aloft, and the cheerful answers to orders, all meant much should the frigate ever meet an enemy worthy to exchange broadsides with her.

Looking in at Concepcion, the Essex proceeded down the Chilian coast and came to anchor in the harbor of Valparaiso. Here she found a number of English merchantmen and one or two Americans at anchor.

As soon as Porter had found a good berth for his

Capturing the Alert.

(See page 35.)

vessel and another for the Essex, Jr., the men applied for liberty.

Odenheimer, Clark, Tittermary, and Farragut asked for shore leave on the second day. It was granted, and in a crowded boat they were rowed to land. The liberty men were dressed in their best white suits, and a brave array of brown, hearty fellows they made as they clambered up at the stone landing place and separated into the narrow streets in groups of five and six.

The costumes of the inhabitants, the broad hats with bright colors, the *serapes* and the *ponchos*, held a great fascination for the boys. Gazing about them, they followed a passageway between the low white buildings until they came to a public square.

Across the plaza a church rose above the palms of a little garden. The deep-toned bell struck the hour, and a procession of priests came from one of the neighboring buildings and entered the doorway of the church.

From the windows of the houses occasionally might be seen dark-eyed women fanning themselves leisurely beneath the shade of the brilliant awnings. At the street corners indolent clusters of men and boys stood smoking.

"Can you imagine these people getting excited?" said Clark, stopping for an instant and looking around at the peaceful scene.

"It looks like Spain," said Odenheimer, who had

been abroad and constantly referred to it. "You can hardly imagine you are in South America."

"Where shall we go now?" put in David.

An idea was suggested to all the boys at the same moment by seeing a handsome *caballero* ride down the street on a spirited, wiry little horse, the silver ornaments on his saddle and bridle glistening and jingling merrily as he pranced from side to side, light-footed as an antelope.

The midshipmen watched him in admiration, and it was evident that the rider had caught their glance, for he touched his horse on the flank with the spur, and the beast stood straight up on his hind legs, coming down as lightly as a feather. At the same time the Chilian lifted his hat.

"*Buenos dias, caballeros,*" he said, smiling and showing his fine white teeth.

"*Buenos dias, caballero,*" returned Odenheimer, in good Spanish. Then he went on: "We were admiring your fine horse, señor."

"Oh, he is a beauty!" said the man. "He is very proud of himself. You're Americans from the warship in the harbor, are you not?" he went on. "What is her name?" he asked.

"The Essex," returned Odenheimer.

"Oh!" exclaimed the man in astonishment. "You have made the English tremble here."

He approached the boys and spoke a word to the horse, which stood as still as a statue while the rider

threw one foot from the stirrup and jumped quickly to the ground.

"Could you tell us," asked Odenheimer, "where we could get horses to ride?"

The Chilian looked pleased.

"*Bien!*" he said, "you have come to the right person. My horses are at your disposal, gentlemen. But stay; can't you come to my *hacienda* and spend the night? I should be most honored."

"We have leave until to-morrow morning," said Clark in a whisper.

Odenheimer accepted for the party.

"I will send one of my men out into the country and bring the horses in for you," said the other. "My name is José del Serrano, and all I have is yours."

Odenheimer introduced the three others by name. Midshipman Tittermary hardly recognized his name as the stranger pronounced it after him.

They made their way down to where one of the little cafés stood at a corner, and Don José, calling a loitering *peon*, addressed him by name, and the fellow soon rode off.

The little horse had followed down the roadway; suddenly he pricked his ears. Up the hill that led from the water front came a strange cavalcade.

"Here are some of our men," cried David, jumping up.

"Sailors on horseback!" laughed Tittermary. "Did you ever see such a sight in your life!"

Up the street they came, a score of the Essex's blue jackets astride, in various fashions, of some sorry-looking beasts they had hired in the lower town.

Stirrups were flying and men were swaying in their saddles and holding on by mane and tail. They swept past with a shout. Don José threw back his head and laughed.

"They are not born to the saddle," he said. "You gentlemen all ride?"

David confessed through Odenheimer that he had never been on horseback in his life.

"We will teach you, then," was the response.

It was not long before the *peon* returned leading four saddle horses whose trappings were scarcely less gay than those of Señor Serrano's little black. The señor superintended the adjustment of the stirrups, and soon all were mounted.

Clark and David had fallen a little to the rear of the others, who had galloped on ahead.

"What do you think of our new friend, David?" Jack asked.

"I don't know exactly. I wish I spoke Spanish," David replied. "You see I can not tell what he is talking about."

"It is my opinion," Clark said, "that he understands what we are talking about. That man speaks English, mark my words!"

"What makes you think so?"

"His expression when we were talking together. You notice it next time."

They rode on through stretches of rolling country interspersed with white-walled, low-roofed buildings. But at last they came to a level plain dotted with cultivated fields and groups of trees, behind which, against the eastern sky, towered a great range of sharp-toothed mountain peaks. Turning from the hot white road up a lane, they came to a low-walled building and entered a courtyard through a gate, the handsome iron doors of which were swung open as they approached. A low veranda, from the posts of which hung gayly colored hammocks, surrounded one angle of the court.

A man dressed in the Spanish costume stepped to the doorway. It was evident at a glance that he was either an American or an Englishman. His light-blue eyes, his ruddy complexion and curling hair, betrayed him in an instant. However, he spoke in Spanish, and was introduced to the boys as Señor del Montigo.

Two or three servants had taken care of the horses, and the party entered the cool shade of the building. Here a long conversation was held between Odenheimer and the host. In the mean time Señor del Montigo stood to one side looking curiously at the midshipmen.

After some light refreshments another ride was proposed for the afternoon, and, nothing loath, the boys found themselves again in the saddle. A little practice

had made them feel more secure, and they enjoyed the swift galloping and the exciting races they ran across the plains. The horse that David was riding had a gait as easy as a cradle. When they had ridden perhaps three miles he and Tittermary indulged in a little run away from the main party, who had entered the shadow of a small grove of palms.

David was exulting in the sense of freedom, and the stretching away of the lithe form, and the soft rebound of the hoofs beneath him, sent the blood double-pace through his veins. "Isn't it fine?" he shouted back to Tittermary, who was some yards behind him.

The latter's horse was not so good and was evidently straining to keep up.

"Hold on, David!" the elder midshipman shouted. "We are getting a little too far off, I think. Hold him in!"

David gave a pull upon the reins, but the only response was a stretching out of the supple neck, and the leather went through his fingers as if he had hold of a topsail sheet in a gale. Again he tried to stop the horse, but the speed seemed only to increase.

"He's running away," he shouted back, for an instant a sense of fear coming into his heart.

Tittermary was now lashing his steed with his cap. But David's horse, turning abruptly to the left, almost unseated his rider and plunged down a steep bank into a long *arroyo*, a dried water course that led into the hillside.

David, who had now regained his courage, wondered how the beast kept his feet.

He could hear Tittermary's shouts growing fainter and fainter behind him.

Again the animal swerved to the right and followed a narrow rocky path; another turn to the left, and then a slow incline, up which the beast pushed as if he knew no such thing as fatigue.

When on the level once more, David looked about him. He could see nothing but a wide space filled with stunted bushes, and the sloping foothills that led up to the mountains. Turning around, he saw that the hill hid the town and the houses from his sight.

Now he tried to guide the horse about, but he might as well have tried to stop a ship with a boat hook.

On they ran. Two or three times it crossed the midshipman's mind that he might throw himself from the saddle and land safely on the ground; but one look at the stone-covered surface made him give up this idea.

A sense of the strangeness of the adventure came over him. Where was he going and when would the horse stop running?

Now they crossed a path and entered a deep ravine toward the not distant mountains. The horse was panting, and it was evident that he could not hold the pace much longer; but he kept at it for some few minutes until he stopped abruptly. David almost flew over his

head. The horse stood stock still, his sides working like a bellows. To his surprise, David found that he was very tired also, and that there had been some exercise in keeping his seat, despite the wondrously smooth gait.

"Where am I?" he wondered, looking about him. "If I could ride to the top of the hill there I could get the direction."

He chirped to his steed, but the latter did not move. Again he tried his voice, and at last in desperation dug his heels into the beast's ribs. How Midshipman Farragut managed to hold on during what followed for the next few minutes was more than he could remember. It seemed that he was most of the time in the air with his arms clasped about the animal's neck, and that the latter was trying to fly and intended to leave the earth for good and all. Apparently, however, he changed his mind, for he surrendered at last, and David guided him to the top of the hill.

He expected that here he could get a glimpse to the westward of the sea; but, once on top, nothing but a succession of barren hills spread out on either side. Then he noticed that at the end of the ravine up which he had been riding a thin column of smoke was rising leisurely. He turned the horse's head in that direction, and the latter with a snort broke out into a run.

Inside of three minutes he halted before a little hut built of stone. From the chimney the smoke was pour-

ing. A man with a great black beard came to the door. What he said, David, of course, could not understand, but he only remembered the name of the gentleman who had given him the mount on his strangely acting animal.

"Señor del Serrano," he said.

The man bowed low and came to David's stirrup. The latter was glad enough to reach the ground again.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE ARRIVAL OF THE ENEMY.

By signs David succeeded in making the black-bearded man understand that he was lost and that he wished to return to Señor del Serrano's *hacienda*. It was evident that the owner of the hut had acquaintance with the horse, for while he was paying attention to David's gesticulations he was patting the beast caressingly on the neck and shoulder.

David was becoming exasperated at the apparent stupidity of the fellow, when he heard a shout down the ravine, and he saw approaching Señor del Serrano and the midshipmen. The señor was profuse in his apologies and apparently was much relieved to see his young guest safe and sound. It appeared that the horse had once belonged to the man who lived in the little hut, and that on another occasion previous to this he had brought him rather an unwilling visitor.

The party headed about, and in an hour or so were once more in the courtyard of the villa. At dinner the midshipmen were presented to the señor's two sisters, black-eyed, black-haired young women, whose age it was hard to guess, for they might have been any-

where between eighteen and thirty. They were gracious and gentle-mannered, and soon the lads were at their ease.

Del Montigo proved to be an Englishman whose real name was Montague. He tried to be very agreeable, and asked any number of questions in regard to the Essex's cruise. The confusion of the boys was great when he declared with a rather sarcastic smile that he now understood the reason of not hearing from one or two of the prizes which the Essex had taken, and the midshipmen found out to their surprise that he was a part owner of the two captured vessels.

From what he said they gathered that those holding the English interests were soon expecting the arrival of some British warships at the station, but as this had been the first news that had greeted Captain Porter upon his arrival at Valparaiso, they were not surprised.

Later in the evening guitars were brought out, and the midshipmen enjoyed watching one of the native dances; early the next morning they left for town. Before ten o'clock they were once more on shipboard.

They found that the same stories of the hospitality of the Chilians were being recounted from cabin to forecastle, and that the officers were talking about giving an entertainment on board the flagship in the course of the next few days.

The time passed very quickly. Señor del Serrano paid a visit to the ship, and Mr. "Del Montigo" also.

The midshipmen noticed that the latter paid particular attention to the armament and to the number of guns of the vessel, and asked innumerable questions, but, as there was no reason for secrecy, these were replied to in as frank a manner as they were ventured.

On the evening of the 7th everything was in readiness for the ball. The spar deck was cleared, the awning spread, and the ship was decorated with bunting and colored streamers. Lanterns wrapped in colored paper and cloth were strung along the sides, and from the shore the Essex looked more like a huge pleasure yacht than a man-of-war.

The Essex, Jr., had been warped close to the side of her larger consort, and until long past midnight the strains of the guitars and the orchestra from shore swept out across the bay. Innumerable small boats surrounded the two vessels, and members of all the prominent families, including the midshipmen's kind host and his sisters, were present at the dance.

As soon as the last boat load of merry makers had left for the shore, Captain Porter hailed the Essex, Jr., and ordered her to get under way and make for the mouth of the harbor, where Downes was to resume the position of sentry and report the appearance of any suspicious sail.

At early dawn the Essex, Jr., was seen flying a signal telling the news that two vessels were in sight. Instantly the word flashed through the flagship. Half of the crew had been given shore leave and the rest

were employed in clearing up the litter and remains of last night's revelry.

There was a slight breeze blowing, and above the point of land to the westward the topsails of two vessels could be made out very plainly; the strangers were beating slowly toward the mouth of the harbor.

David, who was gathering up a line of gay streamers and bunting, was ordered to the color halyards.

"Signal Mr. Downes to return, sir," was the order.

But, as if in anticipation, the Essex, Jr., was already making back into the harbor. Captain Porter ordered a gun to be fired as a signal to the Essex's crew on shore to repair to their vessel.

Evidently from the heights behind the town the two mysterious sails had been sighted, and the signal gun had called hundreds of the inhabitants to the water-front. Lining the wharves, the sailors of the Essex could be seen waiting impatiently for the boats to take them off. At last, as if they could stand it no longer, the men jumped into some of the small craft and paddled with anything they could reach back to the ship. Three Jack-tars, who were quite a distance up the shore and had evidently been back into the country, did not wait for boats at all, but, throwing off their shoes, sprang into the bay and struck out boldly for their vessel.

In the meantime Porter had called away his gig, and David had been ordered to accompany him on board the Essex, Jr. As soon as they shoved off, the

men laid back to their work and the boat lifted at every stroke. Lieutenant Downes hove-to to wait their coming.

It was very evident, as Captain Porter and David scrambled up the ship's side, that the Essex, Jr.'s crew were under great excitement. They were talking together earnestly in low voices. After a minutes conversation the captain, wishing to make a personal reconnoitre of the approaching vessels, ordered Lieutenant Downes to put to sea again.

David wandered forward, and to his delight found old Kingsbury, now a boatswain, making two strides of it between the carronades on the forecastle.

"Oh, Mr. Farragut," he said, "it's a different kind of dancing and to other music we will be stepping, to my mind, before long, sir. Those are the vessels that King George has been at pains to send out for us, I take it, and look a' here, sir; I have seen sailormen and been one all my life, but I never seed a crew so full of fight as ours. They're *itchin*' to be at it, sir."

He stopped for a moment and looked at the flagship. She was now almost surrounded by small boats that had put off from shore. The men were scrambling in at the ports—in fact anywhere, to get on board; the lines of streamers had disappeared. They could see the ports drop and the guns run in for sponging and loading.

"That's the best crew, sir, that ever stepped a deck," Kingsbury concluded.

A thrill of pride ran through David's veins. "And the best officers, too, Kingsbury," he remarked.

"Aye, aye, sir, you speak God's truth," the old man answered. "Look at old Logan—beg pardon, sir—I mean the captain. What is it they say in the good book about the 'war horse scenting battle from afar'?—That's what he is, Mr. Farragut—he's a war horse, sir, and no mistake!"

The Essex, Jr., had gathered a good headway by this time and was close to the mouth of the harbor. The wind was against the two vessels in the offing, and it would be some hours before they gained the inner waters. But there was no mistaking what they were. The square cut of the sails, the long, distinct line of ports, and the steady lift and gleam of the black muzzles of the guns, showed that here at last King George's hounds had found their quarry.

"Both frigates, sir, I think," called Lieutenant Downes from the futtock shrouds, as he lowered his glass.

"Johnny Bulls, too," murmured Kingsbury beneath his breath.

Orders were given to bring the ship about, and soon before the wind she was making back to the anchorage. It had only been an hour and a few minutes over, since Porter had gone on board the smaller vessel. David followed him into the gig and they returned to the Essex. A transformation scene had been enacted. There were no traces of the confusion that only a

short time before had held full sway. The guns were loaded and run out. The cutlasses had been distributed. The men were waiting at their stations; even the deck had been sanded, and the doctors had stretched the tables below in the cockpit.

Lieutenant McKnight stepped forward.

"Have the men all reported?" Porter asked.

"Yes, sir, every one."

"Clean and sober?" the captain asked again.

"Not a drunken head among them," returned McKnight. "There's one lad who may have struck a rather lively gait, but, as he swam offshore, I made no notice of it. Perhaps *he* had been drinking."

The men were evidently looking for some word from Captain Porter, and at last it came, short and to the point.

"Seamen of the Essex," he said, "this is a neutral port, and it shall not be said in after-years that an American disgraced his country by not respecting the rights of another. *We* shall not fire first, but if *they* do, they will get what I believe we can give them—honorable treatment and an honorable thrashing."

A wild cheer that started a commotion on shore was the answer.

The Essex, Jr., had dropped anchor within half pistol shot.

"What under the sun are they trying to do?" said Ogden to David as the two English vessels (for they had now displayed the cross of St. George) came

sweeping up the harbor. But before they had come within the distance of two miles a small boat had put off from shore and been taken up by the larger Englishman. David would have been surprised if he had seen that the man who was assisted up the enemy's side was no other than his acquaintance, Mr. "Del Montigo."

On came the English vessels. Porter had given orders to prepare for boarding and had rigged grapnels at the yardarms, ready to drop them on the enemy's decks should he approach close enough to warrant it; and now it looked like fight.

By a little after eight o'clock, the leading vessel, a frigate, had approached so close that the faces of the men peering through the portholes could be distinguished. The second vessel had proved to be a sloop of war, and was close in the wake of the first.

The frigate swung close alongside and ranged up between the Essex and the Essex, Jr. All hands were at quarters, and on board the English vessel it was seen that the matches were lighted also, for the thin smoke eddied through the ports. Not a whisper was heard.

David had gone down to the gun deck in obedience to a request from Lieutenant McKnight to follow him. A red-faced youth was bending forward close to one of the midship guns, a lighted match in his hand. He was blowing it fiercely and fairly trembling with anger or excitement. Suddenly his feelings appeared to get the

better of him, for he jumped to his feet and sprang to the breech of the gun.

"I'll stop your making faces, my fine fellow!" he cried with a curse.

Just in time Lieutenant McKnight saw the movement and, drawing back his fist, sprawled the fellow on the deck. The master at arms took him by the collar and gave him a push down the hatchway. It is well believed that had this lad (who was the one that had been drinking) fired the gun, the Phœbe (her name was now well known) would have been a hulk in short order. She was so close and in such a fair position for raking that the double-shotted broadsides of the Essex would have ripped her from stem to stern.

Lieutenant McKnight and David hastened up to the spar deck. There was dead silence here—the same ominous quiet as there was below. Captain Porter had mounted a gun carriage, and looking through the companion way, David saw that a tall man in a pea-jacket was also standing breast-high above the bulwarks on the quarter-deck of the enemy. With a show of ceremony the Englishman lifted his hat. He did not have to raise his voice for every word to be heard plainly and distinctly.

"Captain Hillyar's compliments to Captain Porter, and hopes he is well," were the words he spoke.

Porter was swinging his trumpet by the cord on his forefinger. He replied quietly in a firm, determined voice.

Diagram showing the cruise of the Essex.
(From "A History of the United States Navy," by Edgar Stanton Maclay.)

"Very well, I thank you, but I hope you are not coming nearer, for fear some accident might take place which would be disagreeable to you."

He waved his trumpet, and, with the clicking of the blocks, the kedge anchors swung out from the deck and went up to the yardarms. Instantly the Phœbe braced back her yards hurriedly and Captain Hillyar in a careless and indifferent manner said:

"Oh, sir, I have no intention of going on board of you!"

"Well," cried Porter in answer, "you have no business where you are. If you touch a rope yarn of this ship I shall board you instantly!"

Then he raised his trumpet and called across the other's deck to the little namesake vessel, the Essex, Jr.

"Mr. Downes," he shouted, "be prepared to repel boarders and aim your guns!"

The headway of the Phœbe had slowly ceased. She backed down, the tips of her yards passed over those of the Essex without touching a rope, and she swung astern. It was seen then that the Essex was much smaller; but, nevertheless, had not Porter respected the neutrality of the Chilian harbor, the Phœbe would have been at his mercy.

The chance had gone. There was a sense of relief and yet of disappointment in which all hands shared. A sound like a huge sigh went through the ship when the strain was passed. The men stepped on their matches to

put them out, and the officers grouped together on the forecastle, talking in low tones.

The English sloop of war also came about and anchored within hailing distance close to the other frigates.

CHAPTER XIV.

SKIRMISHINGS.

"MR. FARRAGUT, you will accompany me on shore this morning," said Commodore Porter to David as the latter stood alongside the cabin table. The sunlight that was coming in the after-ports gleamed along the chases of two cannon that made up part of the furniture.

Porter had just finished his breakfast. An opened note lay beside his coffee cup.

"You will put on your best uniform and go with me to the house of Mr. Blanco. I believe that I am to have the honor of meeting my old friend Captain Hillyar."

It was well known and had often been talked about through the ship that Hillyar and Porter had once been friends, and that the latter, before the outbreak of the war, had done the English captain some service by taking on board his family and bringing them in his own vessel from Malta to Gibraltar. Their relations had always been of the most kindly character. It was a strange fate that had picked them out for antagonists.

"See that the men are in clean blue and white, and

get out a new boat flag, Mr. Farragut," Porter continued.

David, saluting, hurried from the cabin at once.

He passed Lieutenant Cowel and Lieutenant McKnight entering. They were laughing—laughter which was echoed a moment later from the deck above. David heard the sound of singing—a chorus of men's voices bawling the following verse to the tune of Yankee Doodle:

Oh, Johnny Bull, you've followed far,
We'll do our best to lick you;
Our eagle brave will twist your tail,
In proper fashion pick you.

Running up into the sunlight, David saw a remarkable sight. Midshipmen Isaacs, Ogden, and Odenheimer were standing, with broad grins on their faces, watching the men in the forecastle; they were gathered at the larboard bow and were being led in the chorus by no one less than old Kingsbury, who was for the nonce a visitor; his red face was redder than ever as he flourished his hand and beat time to the chorus:

The lion hears the eagle scream,
And thinks he's surely caught, sir;
But we will see what we will see—
The lion shall be taught, sir!"

Then followed a confusion of Yankee Doodle and a mumble of words that ended in a roar of laughter.

Overhead at the main truck a huge flag was flying,

and on the white ground was the motto in blue letters, "Free Trade and Sailors' Rights."

A sudden silence fell in the forecastle. Their song had been answered by an indignant shout from the decks of the Phœbe. The two vessels were within ear-shot, and so close that the buttons of an officer on the quarter-deck of the latter could almost be counted as they flashed brightly in the sunlight.

The silence of the Yankee sailors had been occasioned by seeing a white bundle slowly creeping up to the main truck of the Phœbe. It was evidently a flag of some sort. There was a tug at the color halyards, and the bundle unfolded into a large white flag, even broader than the motto of the Essex.

As the wind whipped it out straight and square the men could make out, rippling against the sky, the following legend in red letters: "God and Country. British Sailors' Best Rights; Traders offend both."

A cheer arose from the decks of the English ship, and mutterings of anger rumbled through the group of American seamen.

"Here's Billy," shouted some one. A huge figure loomed up the forward hatchway. "Pumpkin Billy" had joined the crew of the Essex but had not been much in evidence, owing to a broken ankle that had kept him below.

"Talk to them, Billy," said some one, making room for the red-headed Yankee to reach the ship's side.

The man grinned, and, drawing a long breath, sent that wonderful voice of his out into space.

"Take down your dish rag!" he shouted.

The men laughed, and a chorus of curses was the response from the Englishmen.

Captain Porter at this juncture came out of the cabin. The smile faded out of his face as he saw the motto of the English flag.

"That's an insult," he said angrily, "a deliberate insult to our brave fellows." As he went down the side into the gig, a boat put out from beneath the Phœbe's quarter. In the stern sheets sat three or four officers, and the crew of the Essex's gig, as they "let fall," looked over their shoulders. The oars caught the water with a single thump in the rowlocks.

"Give it to them, lads!" said Lieutenant McKnight, who, with Mr. Wilmer and Lieutenant Wilson and the captain, sat on the cushions of the gig.

The oars bent and the gig jumped forward; the blades flashed in and out, and the breaths of the men pulling, sounded together, deep and full. Every muscle showed on the brawny backs beneath the clean white shirts.

They crept up on the English gig as if she were standing still. Several of her crew had missed their stroke and they were evidently in no such practice or condition as the Americans. They plashed badly, and one of the officers cursed them loudly as a half bucketful of water came rattling into the stern sheets.

Another dozen strokes and the boats were abreast. A grin was on the faces of the Americans and a cheer broke out from the deck of the Essex, which was answered by a howl of derision from the Phœbe.

Lieutenant McKnight leaned forward.

"Look at our men," he said; "if looks could kill, they would have eaten that crew, boat and all."

"With a good-humored relish, too," Captain Porter added, looking over his shoulder.

At the same time the English officers raised their hats and the salute was returned by the Americans. They exchanged curious glances.

Never did David feel such a strange, nervous tension. It was so odd, rowing peacefully along as though racing, when these very men would be dealing death and destruction to one another—yes, and before long.

Porter's gig reached the landing first. The officers stepped ashore and the commander turned.

"Men," he said, "I don't want a word exchanged with the crew of that boat. Back to your ship as soon as possible!"

The bowman pushed off just as the Phœbe's gig came dashing up toward shore. The men obeyed the letter of the order, but David, looking back, saw a curious sight. Every man Jack of the Americans was pulling with one hand at the oar as the other boat passed, but the disengaged hand was held aloft and the thumb was placed at the tip of the nose.

Had it not been for the presence of the officers the

Englishmen would have retorted in some manner, and mayhap a fine row would have started, in which oars and fists and boat-stretchers would have played conspicuous parts.

Captain Hillyar was fuming with anger as he landed, and the rest of his party were in the same frame of mind. This was evident from their attitudes as they followed the American officers up the street. David glanced up at Commodore Porter's face; he felt as if he were walking beside a powder mine.

The American officers had been at Mr. Blanco's house, which was about half a mile from the landing place, some minutes before the English party arrived. Captain Hillyar and Captain Porter greeted each other with evident cordiality. The former introduced a handsome, slender man who accompanied him as Captain Tucker, of the Cherub.

After the usual civilities and a glass of wine, informal conversation was indulged in about the table. Porter inquired, in his usual method of coming directly to the point, with a half-smile on his face, if Captain Hillyar intended to recognize the neutrality of the port; to which the latter replied with much emphasis and earnestness:

"You have paid so much respect to the neutrality laws that I feel myself bound in honor to respect them also."

"Then," said Porter, with a look of relief, "this assurance is sufficient. We can take our eyes off one

another, and I shall no longer feel it necessary to be always prepared for action."

The conversation drifted to their former meeting in the Mediterranean. David, being a midshipman, was not noticed by anybody, and he sat there listening to the conversation, but of course taking no part in it.

The meeting, however, was not over before some asperity was shown on both sides. David, who had been looking out of the window, noticed that Captain Porter's voice was rising, and he turned.

"The motto on your flag, Captain Hillyar, is aimed directly at us."

"So may our guns be," replied the Englishman.

"Good!" said Porter, bowing. "May they be answered!"

"A promise of much further conversation, Captain Porter."

"But there are no traitors on board my ship."

"It is a reply to your 'Free Trade and Sailors' Rights,'" said Hillyar, "which gives great offense to the British navy; and whenever you hoist that, I shall not fail to hoist the other."

Porter was getting angry.

"The motto you refer to is intended to please ourselves and not to hurt the feelings of others."

Hillyar shrugged his shoulders.

But a minute later good humor seemed to have been restored, and they parted with expressions of mutual pleasure at having met again.

As they went through the companion way when they returned to the ship, Porter, who had not spoken after leaving the house, ordered David to find the sail maker and send him at once to the cabin. This having been complied with, the rest of the afternoon was spent by the ship's tailors preparing a huge motto flag that was thrown to the breezes at daylight the next morning.

"God, our Country and Liberty—Tyrants offend them!" read the line against the clouds.

Three cheers were given by the crew of the Phœbe, and returned by the Essex.

The nervous tension that all hands had felt at first was wearing slowly away. The greeting of the crews of the vessels and the meeting of the officers on shore took on a more good-natured tone, although the songs and jokes still kept the men amused.

Of course, it was seen that this state of affairs could not last long; that sooner or later a movement would be made which would precipitate the long-expected action. All sorts of rumors and talk were rife.

Midshipman Ogden had heard the officers talking in the wardroom one day, and hastened down into the steerage, his face ablaze with news.

"Do you know, the old man" (it was Captain Porter who was referred to in this irreverent manner) "told Hillyar if he sent away the Cherub he would go out and fight him in the Essex?"

"Well?" interjected Midshipman Farragut anxiously.

"And the Englishman refused," went on Ogden. "He said he would take no risk when he had us on the hip."

"I don't believe we will ever get at it," put in Midshipman Isaacs, "unless something stirs them up."

Something did stir them up in the course of the next few days. The ringleaders among the prisoners in the conspiracy at Nukahiva had been kept in close confinement on board the flagship. One of these men, accused of a plot to poison, managed in some way to free himself, rushed to the side and plunged overboard. Before a boat could be launched, a passing English cutter picked him up and took him on board the Phœbe.

Some rather bitter correspondence now passed between the two commanders. Soon the friendly intercourse must be broken if such things continued.

CHAPTER XV.

THE APPROACHING CONFLICT.

THE morning following the rescue of the escaped prisoner the Phœbe and Cherub hoisted their anchors under cover of the darkness and stood for the mouth of the harbor. At daybreak they were seen cruising to and fro, maintaining a patrol of the entrance.

The Phœbe, which was the farther out, began to fly little signal flags, and soon the Cherub answered.

Lieutenant McKnight was watching them through the glass. A man who swung aloft painting the top-gallant mast shouted something down on deck. What he said was caught by one of the quartermasters, who came running aft.

"The man up aloft says there's a sail out to seaward, sir."

Porter happened to come out of his cabin at this moment. As usual, if there was anything to be done by the midshipmen, he called upon David to do it; and soon the latter had scrambled up into the rigging.

He could make out the topsails of a large ship off to the westward, and so reported. Immediately the Essex, Jr., was ordered to set sail and to reconnoitre.

All hands on the Essex gathered at the side to watch her leave. No sooner was she under way than the Phœbe and Cherub both spread their lighter sails and started after her; but they were well to leeward, and so long as the wind held, Downes could have kept them at a distance. But winds are fickle, and after half an hour had passed a cry went up from the forecastle. The group of midshipmen gasped.

The Englishmen had squared away and had got the wind (it had changed three or four points) astern.

"They will head her off!" was the cry which arose from the forecastle.

It was an anxious moment. Lieutenant Downes had evidently seen his position and had turned his vessel's prow back to the haven of safety; the offshore breeze in the new direction held only a few minutes, when it fell dead calm. But the Englishmen were not to be cheated of their prey. They lowered their boats and, getting out hawsers, were attempting to tow their vessels into gunshot range.

Porter had commenced to give his orders. All the cutters and even the longboat of the Essex were soon alongside, and the crews tumbled into them. David had command of the second cutter. The starboard stroke was Pumpkin Billy, and the man on the thwarts alongside of him was the black cook, who was a volunteer for the occasion. It was a race for rescue and a good three-mile pull ahead. The perspiration poured down the men's faces. The oars bent at every stroke and the

cutters forged ahead. The cook was a great oarsman, and in Pumpkin Billy he had his mate.

"You're gaining on them, lads," said David, standing up and shouting encouragement.

The negro turned his head. The sunlight flashed on the gold rings in his ears. He broke out into a swinging song. It was a relic of the paddling choruses of his ancestors on the Congo. The men got the rhythm, and soon David's cutter was leading the rest. Every minute counted. As soon as they had reached the Essex, Jr., hawsers were rigged and made fast to the stern thwarts, and the men slowly towed her in toward the shore.

The Englishmen were rowing almost abreast of them now, but far beyond range, and soon, seeing that the chase was fruitless, they took in their boats and gave it up, and Lieutenant Downes resumed his old anchorage.

The strange sail proved to be a storeship of the English, and she anchored far out in the harbor.

Two days later the Essex got under way and, taking advantage of having the enemy to leeward, sailed into the offing. If it had been Porter's intention to escape, now would have been his time, for it was soon evident that he could outsail his antagonists in any wind or weather; but escape was not what he wanted. As old Kingsbury had said, the "war horse" wished to fight. So, having settled the matter of sailing to his satisfaction, he put back again, and taking up one of the prizes, the Hector, he again made for the harbor's mouth. Here he set the prize on fire and again returned to the

port. This was on the afternoon of the 26th of the month.

The following day was full of excitement.

Angered at the burning of the prize under their very noses, the Phœbe and Cherub stood boldly into the harbor. At five o'clock in the afternoon the Phœbe hove to and fired a gun. There was not a man on board the Essex that did not interpret this as a challenge to single and mortal combat between the larger ships. Cheer after cheer was given as the Essex's anchor rose and she spread her sails. Now in the minds of the midshipmen there was no doubt that they were to see a battle, and the excitement that had been so long smoldering rose to fever heat.

Nearer and nearer the vessels came, the Phœbe standing offshore and the Essex creeping up on her, foot after foot, her men at the guns eager to get within range.

The gun's crews had named the great weapons they served "Bouncing Billy," "Hawley's Pet," "Jumping Jack," "Saucy Sal," and the like.

David's station in action was close to Captain Porter. He was to act as messenger and carry orders to various parts of the ship. Having been sent forward, he caught some of the talk of the men. Pumpkin Billy slapped caressingly the breech of one of the great carronades. One might have thought that he was talking to a restive horse.

"Can't hold her in very much longer, Mr. Farragut," he said, grinning. "She is gettin' restive."

He patted "Brown Bess," and laid his cheek against the cold, unresponsive iron, but a shout of disappointment came from the deck above.

The Phœbe had borne away before the wind and had run down to the Cherub, which had sailed out to meet her. Porter had not bargained to fight both vessels, and so for the third time the men were disappointed—the Essex swung about on her heel and returned to her resting place.

And thus it continued as it had been before—weary days of waiting and nothing done.

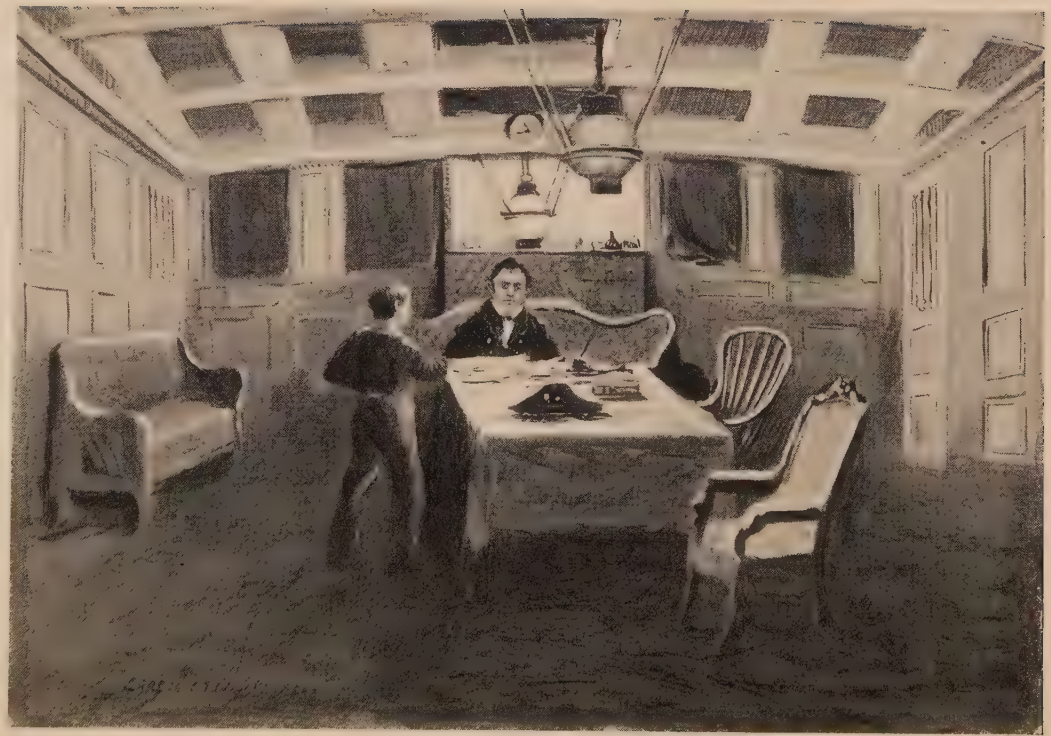
One night a boat expedition had been organized, and the men, under cover of the darkness, had approached close enough to the British vessels to hear the talk on board. As it was evident that the crew were lying on their arms, the cutting-out party rowed back.

Grumbling had now commenced forward in the forecastle.

"We will leave our bones here," one of the sailors was overheard to remark.

"Aye, mates, the war may be over and we not know it," said another.

The midshipmen also caught the feeling of despondency, and feared they should never come to action. But the prognostication of the foremast hand and the forebodings in the steerage were soon to be proved wrong, and the midshipmen of the Essex were to be witnesses and active participants in one of the greatest tragedies of naval history.



"We have started both our anchors, Captain Porter!"

CHAPTER XVI.

MISFORTUNE.

NEWS had arrived at Valparaiso that three other vessels of war had sailed for the Pacific in pursuit of the "marauder," as Captain Porter had been termed. Their appearance was expected at any moment, and at last, to his disappointment, the American commander determined that it was useless to try to bring the Phœbe to single combat.

The Essex, Jr., was no match for the Cherub, and he determined to slip away and escape immediately. A meeting place was agreed on, where Lieutenant Downes was to join him later, if possible; and everything was made ready to take advantage of a favorable opportunity and get out of the harbor. The 28th of March had arrived, and it was only the previous evening that the determination had been formed to put to sea.

The wind had been freshening all the day and had blown, for the first time in months, what might be called half a gale. Odenheimer was on the watch. He was the oldest of the midshipmen, and had been acting lieutenant now for some time. He stopped his pacing

up and down the quarter-deck and stood still as a statue.

"What's the matter, Odenheimer—I mean, Mr. Odenheimer?" asked David, noticing the action.

"Come here, youngster," was the answer; "take a sight on that first ratline, and the white house on the shore."

He pointed with his finger, which was trembling a little nervously. "Are we moving?" he questioned in a whisper.

David looked. Slowly but surely the Essex was going backward. She had already two anchors out, but it was hard bottom and the wind was increasing every minute.

"We are moving," said David, "and dragging fast!"

"Jump below and tell Captain Porter," Odenheimer said.

David ran into the cabin rather unceremoniously. The captain was writing at the table. He looked up.

"Well, sir?" he said.

"We have started both our anchors, and are going out to sea, Captain Porter."

Instantly the commander sprang to his feet and rushed out on deck. He began shouting orders as soon as he reached the air. Not a moment was to be lost in making sail. The men scrambled aloft, and cutting one anchor, the Essex tripped the other, and circled around heading for the mouth of the harbor. All the

other moments of excitement were as nothing compared to those which followed now. The enemy were close in, at the point that made out from the west side of the bay. There was only one thing to do, and that was to pass to windward.

The topgallant sails were taken in and the single-reefed topsails were braced about. The frigate dashed along, the rising seas thumping great blows against her bows and dashing spray and scattering showers along the deck.

"Hurrah, Mr. Wilmer, we are outpointing them!" exclaimed Captain Porter, looking at the two Englishmen, who were carrying all the sail they could possibly stagger under.

David was clinging to the shrouds. They were off for home! This was no expedition to test the sailing, or to lure the other one to combat. They were legging it for life and freedom.

Crash! A noise like the explosion of half a broadside sounded from aloft.

A heavy squall that had been whitening the water and that had been seen approaching struck the ship. The topmast carried away, and the men on the yards went off over the side—all hope gone with them. The Essex was now heeling over badly, and it was almost impossible to keep the deck, but axes were plied vigorously to cut away the wreckage and to right her.

Porter endeavored to put about and to reach the harbor, but at last he gave this up. Closer and closer

the British ships were approaching. The top-hamper had fallen inboard and the yards refused to swing about properly. There was nothing for it but to get before the wind and run as close inshore as possible.

It was a question whether they could reach neutral waters or not before the Phœbe would be upon them. The men worked like demons, and soon had cleared matters up in such a way that the Essex, even in her crippled condition, ran as fast as her antagonist, and led the way into a small bay about three quarters of a mile from a shore battery. Porter let go his anchor within pistol shot of the shore, and the men, busy as bees, went about repairing damages.

It was hoped that the English would respect the neutrality of the country, and the fact that the Essex had placed herself under Chilian protection, but such, unfortunately, was not the case.

As the Phœbe and Cherub came down they were covered with motto flags and flew jacks at every mast-head. Porter was now ripping out torrents of orders and imprecations. But he seemed to have an eye on everything.

"They are going to be at us in fifteen minutes!" he shouted. "Get a spring on the cable, boatswain! We can't use our broadside here."

The men were at work at this when a puff of smoke rolled from the Phœbe's counter.

David Farragut, midshipman, was now to go through the test of blood and flame. He had passed an open

port in time to see that first white billowing smoke with a dash of red flame in the midst.

Then there came a crash at his side and a great white splinter jumped out from the bulwarks. It caught a seaman full in the throat and hurled him off across the deck, lifeless. Another man staggered toward the hatchway, the blood spurting from a wound in his head. He tripped on the combing and plunged to the deck below with a horrid sound.

Now, confusion at first seemed to reign; for full five minutes the Essex could not reply. But at last the guns flared on every hand, and those below started the decks trembling and jumping. Hoarse orders were shouted. The air grew thick with stifling, sulphurous smoke. Now and then a block fell from aloft, and the loose end of a rope trailed down and swung to the deck.

There was one thing that struck David as a strange thing. When that death-dealing first shot was fired he had seen Captain Porter take his watch quietly from his pocket and note the time. The lieutenants were bawling orders and the captains of the guns were shouting to the frantically working crews. These were the first moments of battle before the men get settled down to that fierce steadiness from which emerges victory or well-contested combat.

David had reached Captain Porter's side. He had noticed, before the smoke obscured everything, that three flags were flying in the mizzen rigging and that

the motto "Free Trade and Sailors' Rights" had been thrown out at the foremast.

The Phœbe had taken a position under the stern and the Cherub was on the starboard bow, and they were raking the Essex fearfully.

The long, white splinters, sharp as the edges of a sword, were now common things to see, and screams and hoarse oaths arose on all sides. David's heart stopped as he saw two seamen bend over and pick a figure up from the deck. They stumbled toward the after-hatch. The midshipman saw that their burden was poor Lieutenant Wilmer. He was mangled frightfully. "It's all up with me, David, lad," he said as they carried him past.

David looked at Captain Porter's face to see if he had noticed it. He appeared to notice nothing but the way his ship was handled and the manner in which she was replying to the fire of the enemy. He was grinding his teeth together and occasionally shot an order across the deck through his trumpet fiercely.

During all this confusion the boatswain, Linscott, and three men were over at the side in a small boat trying to make fast a spring on the cable. At last they succeeded, and the Essex, answering to the tugging of the capstan, swung so as to bring her guns to bear to better advantage. A cheer sounded from the close, reeking deck below, for the breeze had blown the smoke over the water, and it was seen that the Cherub was finding out that it was too hot for her where she

was lying. One of her yards was crippled; she tried to spread her sails and get away.

David had overcome his horror now. Though he kept near the captain, he was assisting in serving one of the after-guns. He handed the powder up as the gun was run in, and even on one occasion he took up the match that had been dropped and fired the piece himself.

It all appeared to him like a dream. Then his nerves grew steady.

"Mr. Farragut!" he heard his name called, and ran to the captain, who was just abaft the mainmast. What he was going to say David did not hear, for at that instant a shot came through the waterways and, glancing upward, killed four men within a few feet distance. Porter and the midshipman were deluged with blood.

Little Isaacs here ran up from below. He was bareheaded and his face was grimy and black. The hand he lifted to his forehead in salute was red, and the sleeve of his little jacket was in shreds from the shoulder. Porter had to bend to listen to what the lad was saying.

"Mr. Colwell has been killed, sir," he said, "and Kennedy, the boatswain's mate, has lost both legs."

Porter stood for a moment with his hand resting on Isaac's shoulder. The lad was shouting:

"And there's a quarter-gunner down there named Roach who has deserted his post! He says he will not fight longer. What shall we do?"

Porter turned to David, and, to the latter's astonishment, the order he received he took as if it were the most matter-of-fact thing in the world. Porter reached in his belt and extended a pistol.

"Go below, sir; find this man, and do your duty!" Porter said sternly.

It must have been a strange sight to see the little midshipman, with the great pistol in his hand, stepping among the dead and wounded on the deck and inquiring everywhere if any one had seen Roach; but, search high and low, he could not find him, and once more he made his way up to the freer air and reported.

The two after-guns, which were now among the few that could be brought to bear, had ceased firing. The powder monkey who had been serving them was stretched below in the cockpit, and the guns had no primers. David ran below, intending to go to the magazine and fetch them. As he ran down the wardroom ladder the captain of the gun at the port directly opposite was struck by an eight-pound shot. It hurled him backward with such force that his body fell against the midshipman, and the two came down to the foot of the ladder together. David lay there stunned. At last he regained consciousness and rushed up on deck. Porter saw him covered with fresh blood.

"David, son," he cried out anxiously, extending both his hands, "are you wounded?"

"I believe not, sir," said David, steadying himself by

the aid of a belaying pin. Then he remembered for what he had gone below, and without another word he hastened to the magazine and brought back the primers. Soon the after-guns were growling steadily.

As David turned for a minute, he saw that Captain Porter was lying on the deck. He ran to him and lifted one of his hands. Porter looked up.

"Are you hurt, sir? Are you hurt?" David asked, a sob breaking his voice.

"Something struck me on the head," the captain replied, getting on his feet.

His cocked hat, crushed into an indistinguishable object, was lying in the scuppers.

The spring that the boatswain had got upon the cable had been shot away now for the third time, but such good work were the after-guns doing that both the Phœbe and the Cherub hauled off to repair damages and ceased their fire.

The breeze swept away the smoke toward the shore and it drifted close to the water across the mouth of a small inlet.

It was seen then that the heights of land were crowded with people watching the contest. But the attention of all on board was soon brought back to the English ships again. The Phœbe, leading, and the Cherub close astern of her, came down once more in silence and renewed the attack, choosing their positions slowly. Captain Porter was almost frantic now. *From*

where the enemy was he could not bring a single gun to bear upon either ship!

David stood at his side. He looked back at the deck. Two big men, standing by one of the useless guns, were sobbing with anger and vexation; before he knew it, David was sobbing also. To stand by idly was something awful, and it was a welcome relief when Captain Porter's voice rang out:

"Cut that cable! All hands make sail! We'll close with them, the cowards!" he thundered.

The flying jib was the only sail that could be raised. Every other serviceable rope was shot away.

As the wind caught the rag of a sail the crippled Essex bravely came down upon the other ships and burst into a roar that almost seemed like exultation as she brought her guns to bear again and returned the deadly thrusts.

The smoke now hung so close about the three vessels that accurate gunnery was almost impossible. From the shore only the upper spars could be seen; but the tongues of brilliant red that leaped through the white, obscuring cloud, and the continuous thundering and roaring of the guns, showed that deadly work was being done.

Captain Tucker, of the Cherub, concluded to choose his distance; close quarters were not his style of fighting, and the sloop of war drew off. Porter ceased firing at the Cherub as she drifted out of range of his carronades. He devoted all his attention to the Phœbe,

The Phœbe and Cherub attacking the Essex. (From a picture drawn by Captain Porter)

and for an instant it was hoped that he might get close enough to board. But Tucker had now got the range of the Essex with his long eighteen-pounders. At a safe distance he shot gun after gun, slowly, deliberately, as if he were at target practice. At every steady report there was a crash, and a shower of splinters on the Essex's defenseless side.

Now Porter's hope of boarding the Phœbe disappeared. She apparently determined to adopt the same tactics as her smaller consort, for she sailed off, and, choosing the proper distance, began firing slowly by divisions. Not a shot of the Essex could reach her. With some difficulty Porter wore ship and once more stood in toward the shore. He then ceased replying to the English vessels' fire entirely. It was his intention to ground his vessel, order the crew to save themselves, and set the brave old timbers afire.

The Cherub had ceased her target practice for a time, and the Phœbe was firing only two of her bow guns alternately. Almost every puff and flash was answered by a shock of the torn hull, and many of the men employed in carrying the wounded from the slippery decks were killed.

A strange remembrance came to David's mind. In his search for the cowardly gunner he had noticed two things. One was Murphy, the pig, squealing and running hither and thither across the deck. The other sight was a seaman dragging himself on hands and elbows up

the hatchway. He carried a pistol in his hand. Both his legs were crushed at the knees.

"Where is he? Where is he?" he groaned.

It was McColl, the captain of the gun next to Roach's, and the mangled sailor's quest was the same as David's. Woe betide the Essex's only coward if he had been caught!

The despair that filled all hearts almost took courage with it, as the breeze that had carried the frigate in toward shore shifted two or three points, and once more the poor Essex drifted into range of the enemy.

But a sight that David never could forget now drew his attention. A boat was being pulled straight toward them across the harbor, passing within a quarter of a mile of the Phœbe. The men at the oars were hitting up the stroke as if it were a race of a hundred yards instead of a good mile pull that was before them.

The man in the stern sheets was standing up, motioning with his arms and swinging his body in time to the quick sweep of the oars. It almost seemed beyond human powers to keep such an exertion up for any length of time, but not once did it slacken.

"Here comes Downes!" shouted Captain Porter.

There was no one near him to hear this cry but a little midshipman, quivering with excitement, blackened with powder and red with blood, holding himself with his face over the bulwarks, and his fingers twisted into the hammock nettings. Not an officer was in sight on the deck!

On came the cutter. The figure in the stern was now made out to be Lieutenant Downes himself. He had never ceased shouting encouragement from the time his boat had put out from the side of the Essex, Jr., lying up the harbor.

Half a bushel of grape ripped up the water close behind him and a round shot cut directly in front, skipping along much as a stone thrown from a small boy's hand crosses a mill pond. The water rose in little fountain jets from every side, but not once did the sailors lessen their steady stroke. And now Lieutenant Downes was at the chains amidships. Followed by ten of the Essex, Jr.'s, crew, he jumped on deck. Porter met him as he climbed over the bulwarks.

"What can I do, sir?" were Lieutenant Downes's first words.

Porter could hardly find his voice, and David did not hear the reply he made to Lieutenant Downes's question, as he was ordered to see about the bending of a new hawser on the sheet anchor that was being prepared to let go in order to bring the ship's head around.

The sea was nearly calm and the breeze was going down. The anchor plashed overboard, and the Essex, feeling the strain, swung about. The men on the gun deck fired three or four despairing shots. But no sooner had the hawser come taut, than there was a rending sound, and it parted at the bitts.

To all this havoc another horror was added just at this moment. The sulphurous, choking smoke be-

came strongly impregnated with an odor of burning wood.

A man rushed up from below screaming shrilly. His words could hardly be distinguished, but one glance at him was enough. His trousers and jacket were aflame.

"We're all on fire below!" he cried. "It's near the magazine!"

He made one leap of it, and David, who followed to stop him, was just in time to see him go head first over the side into the water.

Lieutenant Downes had left the ship, in pursuance of Captain Porter's orders, and was rowing back to the Essex, Jr., his boat loaded to the gunwales with the wounded.

Even this was not respected, and the Phœbe opened fire upon him, luckily without result.

Now the grimy, half-naked men were pouring up from below. A score of them followed the man who had gone overboard.

The guns on the spar deck, slewed hither and thither, some of them dismounted and all silent, were deserted. Except for three figures standing near the mainmast, and a confused huddle on the forecastle, no one was to be seen.

"Avast there! Steady, men!" roared a voice as two men ran up the after-hatch and leaped to the forecastle. The first, a huge figure stripped to the waist, felled one of the runaways to the deck. It was Pumpkin Billy!

His face did not look human. His features were indistinguishable; the blood had run over his chin in a broad stream down his great muscular chest. His jaw was partly shot away, and he was making inarticulate sounds like the roar of a goaded bull. David had recognized the voice of the other man who had shouted.

Old William Kingsbury, of the Essex, Jr.'s crew, had stayed on board to share the fate of his comrades! One arm was supporting Pumpkin Billy on his feet. He was urging him to go below. The giant was shaking his head from side to side weakly. David approached, and when within almost an arm's length of the two men, a sharp splinter swept across the deck. Down went old Kingsbury and Pumpkin Billy, the latter never to rise again—pierced, javelin fashion, by a white-oak splinter. David, who had also fallen, but found himself unwounded, assisted Kingsbury to rise.

"Where is the captain, Mr. Farragut?" he asked.

Porter was not to be seen, but as David looked around, he saw him coming out of the cabin. The captain dropped formality.

"David, my boy," he said, "call all the officers. We must strike our flag—God help us!"

Kingsbury, though badly wounded, followed David below.

"All officers on quarter-deck!" he shouted.

There was no response. But one grimy figure came forward through the dense smoke. The crackling of the flames below could now be plainly heard.

Lieutenant Stephen Decatur McKnight was the only officer left to answer the order! His words, though calm, were full of terror:

"We are all down by the head, Captain Porter, and sinking fast. The fire has eaten through the forward bulkhead, sir!"

"I can't watch it!" sobbed old William Kingsbury, back on deck once more, and David also turned away his face. Down came the torn Yankee flag that had been flying at the peak.

Whether by some mistake or not it is not known, but for some minutes afterward the Phœbe and Cherub kept up their fire. Four men who had come up from below and had not jumped overboard were killed after the Essex surrendered. Kingsbury received three more wounds!

"Hoist that flag again! They mean to show us no quarter!" shrieked Captain Porter.

Lieutenant McKnight stepped to the halyards. But at this moment the firing ceased, and all was dead silence except for the wailing and groaning from below and the crackling of the flames, which, however, were being overcome by the water which had poured into the hold and by the brave men who were fighting it with buckets down in the stifling smoke.

There is no use of giving a list of the killed and wounded. The action had lasted two hours and a half. Fifty-eight were killed, sixty-six wounded, and thirty-one were missing—probably drowned. The cockpit was so

filled with the maimed that there was no room even to place them, and they lay stretched across one another in a moaning huddle.

A boat rowed out from the Phœbe, and a lieutenant came on board.

Now, David was faint and felt like hiding his head in his arms and sobbing great dry sobs like a broken-hearted child. But, nevertheless, he was engaged in throwing overboard pistols and small arms. In this he was assisted by Midshipman Isaacs, who had been below during most of the action, and somehow had escaped being wounded. David also threw overboard the signal book, weighted with lead, which he saw lying on the sill of a port.

Porter had refused to give his sword up to the boarding lieutenant, saying that it "was reserved for Captain Hillyar."

CHAPTER XVII.

THE FINALE.

About 8 A. M., after the surrender, David and a number of the prisoners were ordered on board the Phœbe. He clambered up the side, came on deck, and was shown into the steerage where the English midshipmen were. Here he sought a corner, turned his back upon them, and hid his face in his hands. Suddenly he was aroused by hearing one of the young reefers call aloud:

"A prize, ho! boys—a fine grunter, by Jove!"

Under his arm as he entered was Murphy, the pig. David jumped to his feet.

"That pig is mine. I claim him as my personal baggage, sir," he said.

"Ah," said the midshipman, backing away, "you're a prisoner and your pig also."

"We Americans always protect private property," David replied, and seized hold of poor Murphy by the tail.

Immediately a ring was made around the two.

"Go it, little Yankee!" said a tall, light-headed youngster, "and if you lick 'Shorty' you can have your pig."

Midshipman Farragut pulled off his torn coat, and hammer and tongs the two boys went at it.

"Shorty," however, soon had enough, and, by unanimous decision of the spectators, the squealing Murphy was delivered to his former owner.

A marine looked into the steerage.

"The captain wishes to see Mr. Farragut in the cabin," he said.

David, with the aid of two chests, penned Murphy, so he could not get away, and then followed the marine to the cabin.

Captain Porter was seated there at the table with Captain Hillyar. He was pale, and his face showed lines that had not been there a few days before.

"Come and have some breakfast, my boy," said Captain Hillyar, pleasantly.

But David was too discomforted to eat, and declined with as much composure as he could.

"Never mind, my little fellow," said Captain Hillyar, putting his hand kindly on his shoulder, "it will come your day some time, perhaps."

The prisoners were all put on parole and went on shore, and for some weeks David worked as hospital assistant in attending the many wounded.

At last arrangements were made for the transportation of the crew to the United States in the Essex, Jr. The vessel was disarmed, and all hands embarked on her for New York.

They passed Cape Horn safely, met fair weather, and

in the course of time arrived off Long Island. Here they were overhauled by the British razee Saturn, under Captain Nash, who detained them for some time.

Porter, irritated at the lack of courtesy shown in detaining officers and men upon parole, pushed off during a foggy night in a small boat and succeeded in making the shore of Long Island.

After some delay and parleying, the Essex, Jr., was allowed to proceed, but again she was molested by the frigate Narcissus and submitted to another examination.

Through some mistake also two American land batteries fired at the cartel as she made up the outer bay, but, luckily, no harm was done. At last, the next morning, the 7th of July, 1814, the Essex, Jr., came to anchor in the inner New York harbor.

The following morning Captain Porter arrived by coach from Babylon, Long Island, where he had landed. On his arrival in New York he received a great ovation. The crowd became so enthusiastic that the horses were taken from his carriage and it was drawn in triumph all over the city by the people.

The crew and officers were put on parole until regularly exchanged or peace should be concluded; and, as David Farragut wrote in his journal, "Thus ended one of the most eventful cruises of my life."

All the training of these early days, all the hardships suffered, and the responsibilities that had been thrust

upon him at so tender an age, helped to make the future Admiral Farragut the successful man and sailor that he afterward became. The commander who rammed the rebel ironclads with his wooden prows, who stood lashed in the rigging of the Hartford as she passed the forts, only showed the same spirit that he had manifested when a midshipman of the Essex; and as his name is now inscribed on the roll of fame, and as he is reckoned one of our great heroes, it all truly goes to show that, beyond doubt, "the boy is father to the man."

THE END.

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